

Mahatma Gandhi's Warning

AND

Flashes in Harijan Tour

BY

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THE
JOURNALIST PUBLISHING HOUSE,
MADRAS.
1936

Indian Rs. 1-4

Foreign 2s. 6d.

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PREFACE

Mahatma Gandhi was imprisoned for a year for his political activities in 1931, but, when he was in goal, the facilities to carry on Harijan work accorded him at the time of the Poona Pact, when he was in the Yerawada Jail, were curtailed. In protest he went on hunger-strike and was released. Immediately after he was set at liberty, he started out on a tour to make propaganda throughout the country to remove the social and religious disabilities of Harijans.

There is only one way of describing the love and affection of the masses for Mahatma Gandhi, as I saw it on his Harijan tour. They ran after him in crowds on foot out of the cities and sought just to touch the hem of his garments. Whether it was in the forest regions of Betul in biting winter, or on the parched dreary waste of Bellary in the hottest part of the day, whether it was in the populous cities on the plains, or in the quiet hamlets hanging on the heights of the Western Ghats—unbounded was the enthusiasm of men, women and children to catch a glimpse of him who had sworn to fast unto death to uplift the seventy million people who are depressed and made lowly and humble by age-long oppression. They presented him with gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh. The scenes in the tour gave the lie direct to critics who mocked in derision saying that he was trying to blast the rock of custom by the dynamite of fast. The following Hindi couplet or its equivalent was in all mouths :

*Achuthadhar-ki bees adana hi munarb hai,
Mahatma-ki jan bachang hi munarb hai.*

(It is our duty to remove the disabilities of Harijans and to save Mahatma Gandhi's life). The people understood that he was the only person who could easily jerk them out of the nasty rut of a shameful custom.

The tour revealed in unmistakable terms Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of the removal of untouchability. His advice to Harijans was: "When you get up at dawn, pray to God. You must give up drink. You must also give up beef and carrion. Do not gamble. Be clean. Send your children to school. Those of you who do not know how to read and write must go to night schools." While advising Harijans to improve their ways of life, he was conscious that caste Hindus should be reasonable. He warned the latter that, if they did not repent for the sins committed in the past and did not remove untouchability, Hindus and Hinduism would perish.

He told the atheistic young men in Kerala: "I will not say religion is useless and God is a devil. I may lose faith in Hinduism, but my faith in religion and God will remain unshaken. I am praying to God that even if Hinduism and Hindus disappoint, I may still cling to God like a child. It is my conviction that all religions are true and God-ordained and that they serve God's purpose and those who have been brought up under these faiths and in those surroundings."

Not only the poor and the lowly, but also the princes of the land desired to hear him. To the latter, he said: "In no other part of the world has a patent evil like untouchability, been claimed to possess religious sanction as it has in Hindu India. But if you have agreed with me so far, you are bound to regard Harijans as an integral part of common humanity. You have to realize your oneness even with them. It may

be that the parents will dispute the proposition that untouchability is an unmixed evil. You will have then to show the same courage of your conviction even that young Prahlad did. The idea of hereditary superiority or inferiority is, in my opinion, repugnant to the spirit of Hinduism, which teaches oneness of all life in unequivocal terms. The religions of mankind are being examined and tested both analytically and synthetically. And I have no doubt that if Hindus cling to untouchability, Hinduism and Hindus will be swept out of existence. I cling to Hinduism, because it gives me all the solace I need and because I have found in it no warrant for untouchability as we know it today."

It was a peep into the future when he expressed his optimism as follows: "A time will soon come, not a thousand years hence, when the Harijans will help the Savaranas from the mire into which they are sinking."

I had the privilege of accompanying the Mahatma on his tour of the C.P., Andhradesb, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Karnatak, having been deputed for journalistic work. As my reports, which appeared from time to time in the press, including the "Andhra Patrika," form a very interesting and permanent record of Mahatma's propagandist activities and of his plea for the removal of untouchability, I publish them in book-form. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Deshodharak K. Nagaswarasao Pantulu for having given me the opportunity of accompanying the Mahatma.

Lastly, my thanks are also due to Dr. Arthur R.S. Roy, Ph. D., D. Litt., M.D., for going through my manuscript before sending it to the press.

The Author.

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1907. 10. 10.
1907. 10. 10.



Mohitany and A. V. Thakkar.

सीधी 'बद
ख़ाज़र की



"Silence please."



Looking at an enthusiastic bidder.

In the Central Provinces

NATURE OF TOUR

On 7th November, 1933, from the Satyagraha Ashram at Wardha, Mahatma Gandhi started out on a tour to uplift the Harijans. He began with the Central Provinces. The enthusiasm of the masses for the cause that he had espoused was unbounded and, especially in Chattisgarh, the reformed Untouchables considered him a messenger of God. Not only was the tour there a great success, but it also served as an index as to how he and his new gospel would be received by the people all over the country.

As the great tour progressed, it continued to grow more and more exacting. Gandhiji was standing the strain well, but it was a wonder to all how he stood it. His programme often commenced before dawn. He generally went to bed at ten o'clock at night and got up at three o'clock in the morning. Often he got up earlier. For instance, one night he asked his stenographer, Mr. Sankaran Nayar, to wake him up at three o'clock but, when the latter went to him ten minutes before time, he found the master going through the papers. He said to Mr. Nayar, "There is yet ten minutes more for you."

Here is a typical day's programme:—

Amravati to Karanja by car—40 miles, stopping five minutes at Loni: 6-30 to 8-15 a.m.

Karanja to Murtizapur—20 miles: 8-45 to 9-45 a.m.

Public meeting at Murtizapur 9-45 to 10-15 a.m.

Meals: 10-15 to 11 a.m.

Murtizapur to Shergaon: 11-6 a.m. to 12-36 p.m.

Reach Khangaon by motor car from Shergaon—12 miles, 1-30 p.m.

Rest in Khangaon 1-30 to 4 p.m.

Functions and public meetings at Khangaon: 4 to 5 p.m. and 6-15 to 8 p.m.

Even when he took food, with a cup in one hand and a spoon in the other, papers and letters were on his lap. He snatched sleep while travelling by car. The greatest worry was from crowds, who in spite of all that the volunteers did, refused to be kept in order. All along the route large crowds gathered for *darshan*, many coming from long distances. Everywhere he got them to make their contribution to the Harijan fund. All things that were presented to him were sold in auction at the very first opportunity.

At the public meeting at Damongoan he sold the garlands put on him. He has a very interesting way of conducting the sale. He shouts "*Do rupiya ek bar*" (Rs. 2, once) Up goes the price. Again, he shouts "*this rupiya*." He looks around knowingly. Higher goes the price. "*Pauch rupiya*." This he repeats and continues "*ek bar*." Pauses again. He adds "*Pauch rupiya do bar*." With a slight change of his tone he warns: "*abhi chahi rahi hai*." (It is going) Now his face beams with a smile. At long last, the article is knocked

down by an enthusiast and he laughs aloud joyfully. His toothless smile has a charm of its own.

While he was addressing the meeting, he stopped his speech to ask, "How many minutes more to catch the train?"

When the train left the station, he began to write a letter and finished it before reaching Badnera. He writes in the running train easily and legibly.

Flying Visits

At Amravati, the largest city in Berar, Gandhiji had a crowded programme. When his car was about to reach the place of a women's meeting, there was a large crowd blocking the way. It stopped. The volunteers tried, in vain, to keep back the crowd. The car struggled to worm its way through the main gate. At this time a volunteer, about 19 years old, was about to be jammed between it and the wall. As he painfully shrieked a warning, the crowd swung behind, allowing the car to back. He was immediately removed with a fractured tibia. Neither regret nor pain clouded his face.

As it was impossible to go in through the narrow gate, Gandhiji proceeded at once to the Harijan quarters. He visited three *cheries*, which lay far apart.

"*Buz*" (enough) he said to the Harijan woman who put a vermillion mark on his forehead.

"*Buz, buz*," he repeated, when she showed him *dhya*.

The woman took a garland.

"*Buz, buz*," said he with simple satisfaction and a charming smile.

To another place he went a few minutes before the scheduled time. The people had not made all the arrangements which they wanted at that time. Only two carpets had been spread under a margosa tree in front of a mud house by the roadside. He briskly walked up to the spot and sat down on the carpet. He had only a loincloth now. The people were surprised at his simplicity. They stood in a circle. He advised them to bathe daily, as water could be had easily and for nothing; he advised them to give up eating carrion and drink. Like a grandfather he warned them: "Give up drink. It makes a man mad."

He sat there for about seven minutes, while they wondered. Then he asked, "Now shall I go?"

"Please wait a minute. We want to garland you," requested two of them simultaneously. Just then a man came running from a lane with a garland.

Gandhiji did not disappoint the ladies. After visiting another Harijan quarter, he came to the theatre where they had gathered in a large number — this time, not through the main gate but by a back-door. However, he could not give the crowd the slip, for hundreds of people got scent of him and when he returned to the car, he found his way blocked.

In the evening he had to leave the bungalow at six o'clock for Dr. Patwardhan's Akhada (school of physical culture). A young Marathi girl, about twenty years old, stood waiting near the staircase. When he came near the car, he was told that she was waiting there to present him something. At once he went behind the car, while she stepped forward a few paces, put a gold ring in his hand and did *namaskar*, touching

his feet. "Achoo!" responded the Mahatma, and blessed her.

"*Our kare angach demunk hai?*" (Is there anybody else to present a ring?) he asked, smacking his lips, very much pleased with the present.

The European Bidder

The public meeting at Amravati was quite interesting. After he had concluded his speech, Gandhiji asked a member of his touring party: "Where's the small silver-box that was presented at the children's meeting?"

"It is not with me," the gentleman replied.

"Where can it have gone?" Gandhiji questioned.

Quickly he added "Oh, here it is!" He held it up to the audience, laughing. His colour came and went.

"This is a small silver-box, very useful. The price is Rs. 5," he gave it an introduction. Then commenced the auctioning process. The price rose rapidly.

A European, who was standing near the platform, cried "*threes*" (Thirty)

Gandhiji encouraged the prospective bidders "*Chalich*" (Go ahead)

He shouted: "Thirty rupees, once. Thirty rupees, twice." He looked round hopefully and after a pause added, "Now the small box is going."

"Forty," offered the European in English. On hearing his voice Gandhiji turned towards him and I pointed out the gentleman to the Mahatma.

"Not only men but women also can bid," he said with growing enthusiasm.

The price went higher and higher and the European gentleman raised it to Rs. 45. With the price Gandhiji's joy also increased and he could not control his laughter. That kept the audience awaying with laughter.

At last the silver box was sold for Rs. 35.

The European gentleman eagerly bid for the Municipal address. But again he found himself out-bidden. His face was now the very index of his mind. He was determined to get something from Gandhiji. He asked: "I want his signature."

"You mean his autograph," I put in.

"Yes," he said and turned to his wife for a piece of paper. His friends felt their pockets for the same.

"Please wait, I will get you the autograph," I told him, as I had a note-book in my hand.

I stood up and, leaning in front of the Mahatma on the table, requested for his autograph on behalf of the gentleman. I had a page in my note-book ready for it.

"Where's paper?" Gandhiji asked.

"Please write on this page. I will tear it off and give it to him," said I.

The gentleman was much pleased with it and said gratefully: "It's very kind of him." He turned to his wife and read what the Mahatma had written. "It's very kind of him, very," he said to her to make his assurance doubly sure. He gave Mahatmaji Rs. 25.

Gandhiji had written on the slip of paper,

"With kind regards,

16-11-33

M. K. Gandhi"

The gentleman was no other than Mr. E. Herobten of Volkart Bros.

Wayside Scenes

Mahatma Gandhi was expected to catch the train at about 11 o'clock at the Murtizapur Railway Station. But near the outer semaphore it stopped. The receiving signal had not been given, as there had gathered on the platform and its surroundings large crowds of people.

He sat down on a bench. The people, who were on another platform, jumped down and crossed the line. One and all struggled impatiently to touch him, while they were also anxious to give him what little they could in token of their love and regard for him.

"Give it" said Gandhiji putting his right hand out through the window and presenting a full view of his form to them.

"Give it. Quarter-anna, half-anna, anything will do."

All the people were overjoyed to see the good man smile with satisfaction in appreciation of their donations. Among the enthusiastic donors were a woman and a boy of about ten years. They, too, had managed to fight their way through the crowd to touch the High Priest of Anti-untouchability. Each and every one was anxious to put his coin in the great man's hand. In a short time a bag was full. In the meantime there were shouts of "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-Jai."

At Borgaon a thin, dark man, of about 60 years, with a sandal-paste mark on his forehead, madly climbed up to the window and tried to embrace Gandhiji. The Mahatma obliged him, leaning forward. The man shed tears of joy and sobbed like a child. Feelings choked his words.

"Give me money," said Gandhiji to the crowd. "Money is necessary for the uplift of Harijans." And he made a good collection.

When the train steamed into the Akola Station, the crowd rushed towards his compartment. He advised the spectators to disperse quietly saying: "Give a quarter anna, half an anna for Harijan uplift. I shall come here tomorrow. Have the money ready."

Allegations

While Gandhiji was at Akola, a few of Dr. Ambedkar's followers came to his residence and wished to know whether they could have a discussion with him on Harijan work. When they were ushered into the hall, where he was spinning, he welcomed them gladly. They wanted to put certain questions to him.

"Come on with your questions," Gandhiji started them.

Mr. Kandare: "I've many questions to put, but don't be sorry for my questions, or get angry with me."

"Please do put me your questions," said Gandhiji, "I shall not be sorry or angry."

The gentleman took his question paper from his pocket and asked: "Why did you not work for the Harijan uplift before the Civil Disobedience movement?"

"I began the Harijan uplift work in this country in 1920, when I brought the resolution to remove untouchability before the Congress. I began it first in South Africa and continued the work at Sabarmati in 1915. When the masses were ready to hear me, I made it a part of the constructive programme of the Congress."

"You posed at the Round Table Conference as a Harijan leader and denied the leadership of Dr. Ambedkar."

"No," Gandhiji answered, "I said there that I was the representative of millions of people of India. I said there I shared along with Dr. Ambedkar the responsibility of looking after the Harijans' interests."

"Is the temple-entry question connected with politics?"

"No," came the assurance. "It's purely religious."

Mr. Kandare looked into the question paper. As he held it up, his hand shook. For the fraction of a second he paused to think and then interrogated: "What is the amount you have spent for the uplift of Harijans till now?" To make clear the point he added, "that is before the present movement." He explained himself quickly, "from the funds collected before now."

"About Rs. 20,00,000 has been spent for removal of untouchability and uplift of Harijans. I personally have spent nearly five lakhs of rupees. A considerable portion of the Tilak Swaraj Fund was spent for this purpose."

Mr. Kandare heaved. There were pebbles of perspiration on his forehead.

"Nobody cared for Harijans before the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms," Mr. Kandare complained. "That is why we are still backward today. Don't you think so?"

"I've not gone to the legislatures. You can ask me what Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhai Patel have done for the Harijans. They have no communal element in their making. Vallabhai works as though he himself is a Harijan."

"Had there not been the Poona Pact," asked Mr. Kandare with some amount of consolation, "do you think the caste Hindus would have given 148 seats for the Harijans?"

"Yes," replied Gandhiji, with a slight shake of his head.

"Dr. Ambedkar opposed you at the Round Table Conference. By doing so did he do justice or injustice to the country?"

"He thought he did justice, but I was of opinion that he did injustice."

Mr. Kandare now directed his attention to local problems. "There is a local boarding house for Harijans. There are about 50 boarders. Will you support it, that is, feed and clothe them."

"Do you mean to say you intend to hand over charge?" Gandhiji requested him to be explicit. The good Bania that he is, he added, "This is part of a business. I must look into the accounts before I answer the question."

The gentleman dropped this point. He just moved an inch to the front. (All were sitting on a carpet that was spread on the floor) He said: "People have pictures of Lokamanya Tilak with four hands. They worship it. Do you have any objection if we had a picture of Dr. Ambedkar with four hands and worshipped it. We believe he has done us good."

"No," said Gandhiji in seriousness. "You have a right to do that. Whenever the conversation between me and Vallabhai in the Yerawada Jail turned upon the Poona Pact, I used to picture in my mind's eye Dr. Bhimabao Ambedkar, whom I wanted to please. I regularly read the *Janata*, the weekly of his party. I

admire him. I may differ from his views, but admit he is a brave man. Brave men also err. I consider myself a brave man and I confess I have committed many mistakes."

I thought for a moment the questions were exhausted. But—"The members of the Harijan Sevak Sangh of Berar don't make an honest attempt for the uplift of Harijan" Mr. Kandare put in.

"Tell me that," Gandhiji encouraged him. There was the promise of redress in his tone. "I want more information."

"How can I tell you?" pleaded the complainant. "You live in a far away place. I am poor and have no money for train fare for the next railway station."

"You can send me details of the charge by a not-paid," Gandhiji found for the petitioner a way out of the difficulty. "As the matter concerns Harijans, I shall pay $3\frac{1}{2}$ annas and accept the letter."

Mr. Kandare's friend, Mr. Dowlat Lakshman Kadasay then took up the interrogation and Gandhiji answered him with growing enthusiasm.

Q. The funds of the Harijan Sevak Sangh are spent on the caste Hindus, who are paid by it. So Harijans do not derive benefits thereof?

A. I don't think anybody is paid. Please give me the names of those who are paid.

Q. Have not you said no religious work can be done by paid workers?

A. He must be given allowance to keep his body and soul together.

"Harijan uplift funds are spent for non-Harijan work," Mr. Kadasay informed.

"If it is so, it is wrong," Gandhiji remarked "I shall have to do penance. I have only two eyes. The

masses have thousands of eyes. They must be on the watch and give me the information."

Mr. Kadasay said that he had complained in a public meeting that the Karanja Harijan Sevak Sangh did not render help to Harijans. As a mark of punishing him for that, institutions like the Cotton Market Committee withheld support given to Harijans from that very day. Gandhiji asked Mr. Thakkar to note it.

In the end Messrs. Kandare and Kadasay garlanded the Mahatma.

Sanatanists on the Scene

When Mahatma Gandhi left Wardha on the tour, he weighed 93 lbs., but by the time he reached Raipur he was 100 lbs. This showed that he was then in his element. To put it in other words, he was quite at home and comfortable during the tour, perhaps, there was the satisfaction that he was really working, nay, toiling day and night for Harijans.

Swami Lalnath, a Sanatanist of Benares, who had been trying to create ugly scenes in some places from the time the tour began, came to Gandhiji at Chettisguri and complained that the people did not allow him to proceed with his speech at a meeting. Gandhiji requested the local reformers to get him a patient audience.

Later the Swamiji returned. A large crowd had gathered round Gandhiji's residence. The Mahatma, who was observing silence then, took him to the balcony, put him on a pedestal and motioned him to address the crowd.

Swami Lalnath began: "*Sahjans*/" (Good friends) and at once the audience created a hell of noise.

Gandhiji put his finger immediately to the nose signifying that silence was requested.

The Swami began again. This time a section of the audience howled him down. So, he turned to Gandhiji in utter discomfiture. Gandhiji at once waved his hands up and down, spreading them like wings. His look was more eloquent than words. The noise subsided.

The Sanatanist speaker began: "*Saguna! mai ab kahi chahi hui karna nahi chahia.*" (Good friends! I don't like to make a long speech now) There was still some flutter.

Mahatmaji had, meanwhile, put a piece of paper into the hands of his host, Pandit Ravi Shanker Shukla. The Pandit read it aloud. It was in Hindi and a free rendering of it into English is: "Friends, I request you to listen patiently to the Swamiji. It is essential that you should know his point of view also."

That was enough. The Swamiji addressed the audience. When he finished, the crowd dispersed with shouts of "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-Jai."

All marvelled at the "mute" protector, who as a "truest friend and noblest foe," secured a patient audience for the Sanatanist.

It must be mentioned that about a dozen volunteers working under this Swamiji had figured in a scene at Akola. A quarter of an hour before Gandhiji left his residence to go to the public meeting, they assembled in front of it and sang songs belittling him. A few minutes after their arrival, the Swami came into the house to talk with him. A large crowd gathered in front of the gate and the Police Officer on duty told

the Sanatanist volunteers to go away. One expected unpleasant scenes; for they seemed to be resolute and had, it was reported, even vowed to lay down their lives to prevent Gandhiji from going to the meeting. But, when the Police came on the scene, they cleared away after reviling at them for a while.

Sympathisers

The train was about to leave Tumear Road Station, when up jumped into Gandhiji's compartment a person dressed in European clothes.

"Good morning, Mr. Gandhi," he addressed the Mahatma, taking off his hat and bending forward. He was panting for breath.

Gandhiji, who was sitting in a corner seat on the row farther from the entrance, looked up instantly. His lips slightly opened showing the gap in the rows of teeth.

"I'm the only European living in this place," the gentleman added.

"I hope you find it convenient?" asked Gandhiji.

"Yes," came the reply. "I'm the only European," he said again.

"What are you?" asked Mahatmaji.

"I was on the Railway, had an accident. So I've retired."

"I see."

"God bless you, Mr. Gandhi," he said in prayerful attitude, looking up to heaven.

The train whistled.

"Mr. Gandhi, my name is Young," he said and jumped from the moving train with an expression of delight.

As the train approached Gondia Station, Mahatmaji woke up from sleep and sat in his place. A large number of men, women and children crowded near his compartment, both on the platform and on the off-side. As they were eagerly waiting for his *darshan*, He immediately left his seat, went and stood near the entrance. Some Harijan children climbed up the steps to touch him. He held out his hands for them. They touched his feet and carried the blessing to their eyes. He patted them saying, "*buz, buz*" (enough, enough)

"Give me, a quarter anna, half an anna, anything you can," said Gandhiji to the crowd. "I know you are quite poor, but there are poorer men and women than you. There must be money to help them, to elevate them." He stood at the entrance, clad in his loin cloth, patting the Harijan children with his right hand and holding out his left to accept charity.

"Distribute the fruit to all the children," Mahatmaji said, when a lad brought some plantains.

A woman presented him with a sieve. It was new. "What is this!" exclaimed Gandhiji. There was only a minute for the train to start but he availed himself of it for doing business. "What a good and useful utensil is this!" he said, as he held it up for the crowd. He put his upper cloth on his head to ward off the sun, and put the sieve for auction. The price began at 4 annas.

Up the bid went rapidly: Rs. 5, Rs. 6, Rs. 12 and finally it was knocked down for Rs. 21.

When he went back to his seat, coppers rained into his hand. As the train gained speed, an old man, who was not able to put his quarter-anna in Mahatmaji's

hand, flung it in. It struck the window and fell into Gandhiji's lap. The Mahatma laughed out his thanks to him.

When the train had left the station, the members of the party took their mid-day meal. And Gandhiji wrote something (perhaps, a letter) in Gujarati.

Gandhiji can get sleep whenever he desires. That day on the bench he lay like a child with legs folded and one hand under his head to serve as a pillow.

At Raipur, while auctioning a khadi piece, the bid stood at Rs. 30. Gandhiji paused a moment and informed the audience, "Once in Tamil Nadu I sold in auction a khadi piece for Rs. 1,000. I don't want Rs. 1,000 now, but I don't like this to go for Rs. 30."

The bid rose.

A girl of six years old came stealthily and garlanded him. He looked at her smiling and said: "Tell your mother that I want your bangles."

Chatisgarh

In Chatisgarh, Gandhiji had a most enthusiastic reception from the "Satnamis" the reformed Chamars.

Forty years ago, there was a reform movement in these parts and the Chamars gave up many of their old evil habits. Again, there was another reformation with greater intensity and of wider range, when the already reformed people gave up drink and flesh. Some of them do not eat even onions to-day. Now they are called Satnamis.

While driving to Bilaspur, near the Shivenath river hundreds of people were seen gathered together, some of

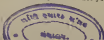
whom were cooking. They had come there on the previous night to catch a glimpse of Gandhiji, who was expected to pass that way the following day.

At Bilaspur his residence was besieged by thousands of people, who were eager to get his *darshan*. To satisfy them he came out on the balcony four times. He stood there in his loin-cloth with his arms locked behind. After they had seen him, they went away in delight.

At the public meeting 60,000 people had gathered in a town of 40,000 inhabitants. The paradox is explained by the fact that a large number of them had come from distant places. One could have easily counted in hundreds the people who had walked 30 or 40 miles to see the Mahatma. The enthusiasm of the people was so great that they refused to be controlled. A public meeting was held for ladies alone, where he realised nearly Rs. 1,000. The local branch of the Indian labour union availed itself of his presence to hear him and present him with a purse. At the railway station he gave this message to the workers, who came to see him: "*Harijan seva hi mukhya dharma hai*" (Service for Harijans is an important duty).

At Baloda Bazaar a Vishnu temple was opened to Harijans. This had been built 15 years ago by the caste Hindus. At the public meeting he advised Harijans to avail themselves of the opportunity to attend the services in the temple.

At a place called Kumbhari 5,000 people had gathered to hear him. Although this place was not included in the tour programme, the temptation was too strong for the Mahatma to resist. He began the address: "I am pleased with the manner in which you conduct yourself



at the meeting. Your behaviour has constrained me to address you."

There was literally pin-drop silence.

The English Disciples

Gandhiji visited Miss Maryben's *ashram* at the hamlet of Khadi-Seoni Ghat and spent half an hour there. On the *ashram* door was written "Welcome Tata" (welcome grand-papa), the first word was in English but the second in Telugu. That was the work of a little Telugu girl inmate.

Gandhiji then went to the Duncan Ashram at Baraling on the Satpura range. As he was crossing the river-bed on foot, a man, who had the appearance of an ascetic, came to receive him. He was thin and sun-scorched, and it was hard to recognise an Englishman in him until he began to speak. He was Mr. Duncan Greenless, who was formerly a professor in the National College, Madanapalle, and was convicted for his views on politics in this country.

Gandhiji climbed up to the *ashram* with surprising sureness of foot. As he sat down in the *mandap*, he looked at the scenery and said, "I must take my rest here."

"Please do, when you return," requested Mr. Greenless.

"But I've not the time," Gandhiji excused himself. "There's not a stream so swift and sparkling in all Simla."

"The fish are extremely tame," informed the host.

"Oh! that is because they know that they won't be caught and eaten," said the Apostle of Ahimsa. And he shook with laughter.

Mr. Duncan Greenless informed the visitor that food-stuffs had to come from towns.

Looking at the *ashram*, Gandhiji said: "Of course, this is your dormitory, which is dignified by the name *ashram*."

Miss Maryben, who was sitting a few feet away from Gandhiji, told him with a knowing laugh: "This preserjan asks me, 'Where's the School?'"

"You conduct a school with a girl there and Mr. Duncan with a boy here."

After a few minutes, Gandhiji asked turning to Mr. Duncan: "You are growing?"

"I am just on the look-out. This is a beautiful place."

"Really," approved Gandhiji.

He asked for the name of Miss Maryben's Telugu girl student.

"She has two names," replied Mr. Duncan.

"Let me have one," said Gandhiji with eagerness.

"Chandravati."

The little girl came near Mahatmah and did *namaskar*.

"This is as beautiful as you are," said Gandhiji to the child showing her a plantain fruit. "Take it."

He patted her affectionately and filled her pockets with more fruits.

Mr. Duncan took the visitor to a thatched tent. It was not finished. It was put up on a small piece of level ground cut into the hillside.

Looking down into the river below, Mr. Duncan informed Gandhiji again: "The river is too swift to bathe in the rains."

Gandhiji spent nearly half an hour in the ashram.

When he said that the time was up, Miss Maryhem requested: "Please, wait a minute."

"I must keep my time. I've to go."

Then he left for Betul, where he had a heavy programme for the day.

Advice to Harijans

The addresses presented to Gandhiji at Saugor were taken as read to save time. Holding the bundle of addresses in his hand, he mentioned the names of the associations. When he had finished, one gentleman on the platform murmured, "Jain Association." "I'm sorry," said Gandhiji filling up the omission, "it was left out by oversight. The association has given an address."

He advised Harijans to repeat Ram-nam at dawn, assuring them of its beneficent influence.

At Katni Gandhiji and party were put up in the Tilak Vidyalaya situated in Harijan quarters. Early in the morning he walked to a Harijan street, which he was happy to find clean and neat. Walking briskly to the other end of the street, he got up on a mud platform built round a mango tree, on which was hung a small picture of the Mahatma. As he stood on the elevated place, he looked about as if summoning the people, and they hastened to him.

A child presented him with a purse and a flower. He thanked her for the presents and stroked her hair, which was dishevelled and had no trace of oil.

"Why don't you comb your hair?" he asked her, trying to smoothen the mangy growth.

She looked down.

"Why don't you give her a bath?" he questioned her father. "Look what a lot of dirt is in her eyes! Why not you give her a bath daily?"

"Yes, I give her baths," replied the father with hesitation.

"How many times a year?" humorously asked Mr. Thakkar, and there was laughter.

"What a lot of dirt there is in her finger nails!" continued Gandhiji, holding her tiny fingers in his hand.

The father blinked.

Gandhiji's tone and look were just like those of a kind parent.

"Have you all given up drink?" he put it frankly to the men:

"Yes, given it up," they replied promptly.

"But some old men still drink," put in Mr. Thakkar, which caused laughter.

"Not I," pleaded an old man, who seemed to smart at the witty suggestion.

"Not you, but old men," Mr. Thakkar repeated the allegation.

"Don't eat beef," Gandhiji advised them.

"We've left that habit long ago."

When he asked whether they had anything to bring to his notice, one of them complained that they got poor wages and had to give school fees for their children.

"But I'm told your children get free education."

The man turned to the by-standers, who confirmed his charge.

Some women came with a lot of flowers. "I've a cold, please don't put them on me," said Gandhiji to them. They put the flowers on his feet, and did *sawastar*.

He gave a dozen copies of *Bhajan Mala* to be distributed in that street.

At Raipur, when he went downstairs to go to the ladies' meeting, he found over a hundred Harijans awaiting him in the quadrangle. He took his stand right among them and advised them: "Don't drink. Don't eat beef or carrion. Be clean."

After a moment's pause he asked like a teacher, "Do you understand?" At once all the heads shook in affirmation. But the teacher was doubtful. He immediately picked out a man, who, too, had shaken his head and said: "Tell the women what I said just now."

The man stood up and put his hands to the turban to adjust it. He began: "Mahatmaja says" His fingers fumbled in his pocket as if for inspiration. He looked rather confused and turned to Gandhiji.

"You tell them," Gandhiji picked out another man.

He said: "Mahatmaja advises us not to drink."

He could not go farther.

"Beef," came the cry.

"Mahatmaja says this also. We must not eat beef." The man had, perhaps, forgotten the rest.

"Carrion," suggested another.

"Yes, we must not eat carrion also," he added.

"Do you understand?" asked Gandhiji turning to the women.

"Yes, sir," answered a dozen of them.

"Then go ahead," said he to the man.

But he looked blank. However, on getting a catch-word, he said in conclusion: "Mahatmasji says we must bathe daily after doing our work. We must be clean."

"If you act up to this advice, God will make you better and all of us better," concluded Gandhiji.

There was silence for a quarter of a minute, which he broke: "Now, I take leave of you. I've to go to a meeting."

Gandhiji began his speech at the ladies' meeting in the Municipal School: "Please less noise. If you want to hear me, there must be less noise."

His voice was drowned.

He continued: "Those who want to present me with rings, necklaces, anklets, etc., please do present them now."

A lady who was sitting very close to the platform responded immediately. Others followed suit. In a few minutes he had a small heap of jewels. But all the while the noise continued with vigour unabated. Unfortunately, he had to leave the meeting abruptly, as he felt like vomiting. Miss Uma Bajaj, the daughter of Seth Jarnail Bajaj, helped him to go to a room. He was ready to go back home in a short time.

In a Temple

At a village called Risama, near Amgaon Railway Station, a temple had to be declared open to Harijans. Gandhiji got down from the car, went right up to the building, left his sandals outside and ascended the stairs leading to the place of worship. Those that had gathered there marvelled at his scrupulous care in trying to preserve the sanctity of the place, for some of

them had gone up with *chappals* on. He jostled through the crowd to get into the middle of it. He advised: "All those who come to the temple, must come after bathing. The temple is a place of worship."

He looked round and asked: "Do you understand?"

A Harijan woman replied: "Very well, sir."

"Those who want to worship in the temple, must give up drink and beef. They must not eat carrion."

"No, sir, we will not eat them," promised the same lady, shaking her head to emphasize her assurance.

He again looked round him and some more persons gave the same answer.

"So, that's all. Now shall I go?" he asked.

"*Mabatma Gandhi-ki-Jai*," rose the farewell shouts.

"Farewell but not Welcome"

The same morning after a few miles' drive Gandhiji addressed a meeting at Laungi. He was presented with a tiny silver umbrella and a silver national flag.

The welcome address was held up for bid. There was no response. Someone in the crowd said: "We are poor, sir."

"Never mind," Gandhiji encouraged. "I don't want Rs. 1,000. Even if the bid is half a rupee or Rs. 10, I shall sell the article—"

"Rs. 5," shouted a bidder

Once the bid began, the Bania found his way up, with sweet smiles and gentle nods.

"I'm going immediately," said the guest suddenly. Nobody caught his meaning.

"Look here!" he explained, "you yourself want me to go."

The hosts were perplexed.

"Eh, look here! You have written on the silver umbrella *shubhagam* but not *shubhagamam*." (*Shubhagam* means auspicious farewell and the other word means welcome).

Unity in Diversity

At Morvi, where there were sharp differences between Brahmans and non-Brahmans, not unmixed with bitterness, Gandhiji spoke at some length and said: "These differences are verily the offshoots of the curse of untouchability, for they proceed from a sense of superiority and inferiority. The fourfold division of *Varna* is based on duty and not on right. *Dharma* does not confer rights but lays down obligations. Where all perform the duties that have fallen to their lot, no one is higher than the others. Once we are able to purge ourselves of untouchability, and with it the spirit of high and low, we shall realize the unity underlying all races and religions. In spite of the differences of races and religions, we shall learn to tolerate and respect one another and consider all human beings as children of one God and, therefore, brothers and sisters to one another. God is the creator of all life: all his creatures are, therefore, equal in His eyes. Humanity is a gigantic tree having innumerable branches and leaves, and the same life throbs through them all. The realization of unity in diversity is implied in the removal of untouchability."

Advice to Princes

By special invitation, Mahatma Gandhi visited the Rajkumar College at Raipur and addressed the

young aristocrats in English. The students and professors numbered sixty, and there were some Government officers also.

Gandhiji was seated on a platform covered with a beautifully coloured *khadi* carpet. He sat like a statue but for the occasional gestures of the left hand to drive home the meaning.

The students' dresses formed a striking contrast to his. Their multi-coloured clothes and their turbans spoke to the nature of the burden they would have to undertake.

Gandhiji said:—

"When I received your invitation, I felt at once that, if the Reception Committee here could make the necessary time, I would love to address this audience of students, who, when they have finished their education, will be called upon to bear a great responsibility and burden. You were also thoughtful enough to send a message to my host, Shuklaji, that whilst I could speak in Hindustani, if I so chose, you would appreciate it, if I addressed them in English; and you were good enough when I exchanged a letter with you to tell me that many of the boys under your care did not know Hindustani. Thereby you and the Principal inadvertently supplied me with the text for my message.

"I should like you, sons of chiefs in these territories, to remember that you will be expected not merely to confine yourselves in these days of progressive enlightenment and rapid inter-communication to your comparatively very small territories, but you will be expected to extend your horizon; and if you will do so, as I have no doubt you will be obliged to do by force of circumstances, it will be necessary for you not merely to know the language of the province in which your lot

is cast, but you will be expected to know also the language that is most universally used in this country. And you may not know, all of you, I am sure, do not know that over 22 crores of the people of this country know sufficient Hindi or Hindustani to be able to understand what is spoken to them and to express themselves, however broken their language may be. No Indian, having to shoulder the responsibility that you will have to shoulder, can possibly afford to ignore such a universal language.

"There is a method in my mad love of Hindi. I am a lover of the English language, and I would like to speak in the English language as well as is possible for a foreigner to do and compete with Englishmen. So you will not misunderstand me when I tell you that it is your duty to understand Hindustani and I will beg the Principal and his staff to realize the special condition of this country and to feel with me that it is desirable for the Chiefs of India to understand Hindustani, through which alone they can know the India of the people.

"This brings me to the central point of my message. We have been in the midst of Englishmen in various walks of life. I have had the painful duty very often of criticizing the policy of the rulers. I have not minced words. I have spoken straight from my heart, but, as I have told you, I claim the closest friendship with hundreds of Englishmen. I cannot forget some of their priceless virtues. I propose to single out one of them for you. In England, there is the living family tie between its noblemen and their domestic servants. It was a matter of joy to me on visiting them in their homes to find that there was a subtle bond of affection between them and their servants. There was no

untouchability there. What I have told you is literally true of hundreds of the noblemen of England. Wherever I went it was an unexpected pleasure to me at the end of the visit to be introduced to the domestic staff not as inferior beings but as members of the family. I wish that you would copy this virtue in your own lives.

"There is unfortunately among us a feeling, that Chiefs are Chiefs and they can never make common cause with the ordinary people and so you find the tragedy—however it may be necessary to-day—that special schools and colleges have got to be built for you. You dare not, you will not go to common schools and colleges. You may not know that King Edward and the present King, I am speaking subject to correction, worked in the Navy, as if they were ordinary sailors, and that both father and son shared the hardships of a sailor's life. Will you do that? You are confined, as it were, to hot houses and are taught to believe that you have been gifted with the special divinity of God. Believe me there is absolutely no difference whatsoever between you and the common-folk except this: that you have opportunities that are denied to them. But, if you do not make use of the opportunities God has given you, it will be counted against you in God's book of accounts. Know that the essence of education lies in drawing out the very best that is in you. You and I can take the positive comfort that all of us have an equal potential capacity for being good or bad. I, therefore, feel that all your education will be in vain, if you do not learn the art of feeling one with the poorest in the land.

"This brings me, in the natural course, to untouchability. In no other part of the world has a patent

evil like untouchability been claimed to possess religious sanction as it has in Hindu India. But if you have agreed with me so far, you are bound to regard the Harijans as an integral part of common humanity. You have to realise your oneness even with them. It may be that the parents will dispute the proposition that untouchability is an unmixed evil. You will then have to show the same courage of your conviction even that young Prabhad did. The idea of hereditary superiority and inferiority is, in my opinion, repugnant to the spirit of Hinduism, which teaches oneness of all life in unequivocal terms. The religions of mankind are being examined and tested both analytically and synthetically. And I have no doubt that, if Hindus cling to untouchability, Hinduism and Hindus will be swept out of existence. I cling to Hinduism, because it gives me all the solace I need, and because I have found in it no warrant for untouchability as we know it to-day.

"If I have invited you to copy the virtues of Englishmen, I must, with deference to the English friends present here, warn you against their vices. That immortal poet-saint, Tulsidas, has left us a verse of deep truth. He says that we should live even as the fabied swan does, sift virtue from vice and take the former leaving the latter alone. I would have you, therefore, leave alone their two national vices—drink and races. Many Englishmen deplore them. I have seen many an English home ruined by the craving for liquor and gambling at the races. And so have many princes been ruined by them. I hope that you will learn to shun these two evils."

When the speech was over, Mr. L. Smith-Pears, the Principal, proposed a hearty vote of thanks to the

distinguished speaker. Amidst applause and shouts of "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-Jai" Gandhiji drove away.

Meeting at Katni

On his way to the public meeting at Katni, Gandhiji paid a visit to Mr. George O. Forrester, the Municipal Chairman, who was bed-ridden. Gandhiji enquired about his health.

"I hope you'll soon be better," he said at last to the patient.

"I hope so. I wish you all success in your noble task," Mr. Forrester told the visitor.

Just before Gandhiji left the house, Mrs. Forrester presented him with an envelope containing currency notes, and garlanded him.

He reached the Forrester Playground, perhaps much too early. In fact, he had begun his day's business when many a citizen was lying in bed unwilling to go out into the chill of the morning. All the same, there were about 4,000 people in that place, where the meeting was to be held. But some of the local leaders had not yet arrived. As he sat on the platform, he beckoned the audience to come nearer. Before he had begun his speech, he was presented by the ladies with a bale of yarn, a number of coconuts, oranges, pomegranates, garlands and jewels. A lady took off her ring from her left-hand finger and gave it to him. "What is your name?" he asked. "Ramabai," she replied. An old woman crawled up the dais and presented him with a *talasi-mala* (beads). Another old woman gave him a pair of silver bangles. Pointing at the bigger bangles that were on her hands, he asked her for them, and was told that they were made of nickel.

He prefaced his speech thus: "Those that are able to hear me, please lift up your hands."

A forest of hands sprang up. The loud speaker worked satisfactorily.

"Now ladies must make less noise," he continued.

When the auction sale of articles began, Srimati Ramabai bought the silver casket presented by Harijans. He immediately said: "Good! Ladies must also take part in the auction."

The bid for another silver casket stood at Rs. 25.

"I'm not going to give this away for Rs. 25," he regretted. It was, indeed, a beautiful casket. The people at once realised it. So the price went higher. The bid was again stationary at Rs. 35.

"Shall I let it go?," he pleaded pathetically. He had to.

Another silver article was offered Rs. 12. "You want it knocked down for Rs. 13?" he asked the bidder in an ironical tone. That gave the man no chance.

At the closing stage the audience had swelled to 10,000 and so he had a difficult task to force his way back.

The Gwalior Students

It was midnight when the train brought Mahatmaji to Gwalior Station. There was a large crowd on the platform, and it seemed as though it was a crowd of ghosts. For, all the people were clothed in woollen dress and wrapped in shawls to keep themselves warm in the winter night. Only a few of them had the good

fortune to see the Mahatma. A large number of college students, who were determined to catch a glimpse of the passenger, threatened to break open into the compartment. However, better sense prevailed and they immediately got into the train to have their desire satisfied at the next station. But, at every station there was such a big crowd that many students had to travel up to New Delhi. Not content with seeing him there, these young enthusiasts waited to hear him speak at the Gandhi Gardens in the afternoon.

The reader can well imagine what a terrible strain it must have been on Gandhiji to wake up at every station, in shivering cold, as soon as shouts of "Jai" were heard. And the *darshan*-seekers were not satisfied if they saw him wrapped in shawl.

Delhi Rebuked

Gandhiji spoke at the top of his voice in the public meeting held at the Gandhi Gardens, Old Delhi, and it was in a severe tone as well. He said: "I visited the Harijan quarters this morning in the city and they are the worst I have seen so far. These quarters do not have sufficient lighting and water. It is a shame to the cultured citizens. I don't think there is meaning in giving me addresses and purses, when the Harijan quarters are kept in such a deplorable condition. It must be borne in mind that I am not touring to receive addresses. If the Municipality had no money, the people would have been better advised if they did not present these purses. If, instead of giving me the addresses, they had promised me to ameliorate the conditions of the Harijans within four days, I should have been better pleased."

Jap's bid at Auction

Gandhiji sat with articles strewn around, like an old vendor who sells toys by the wayside. When he gave the Harijans' address the necessary introduction, the first bid was a quarter anna. "*Accha!*" he enthusiastically welcomed the bid, small though it was.

"Rs. 5," offered another, encouraged by the cheerful and optimistic look of the auctioneer.

There was no time to be lost. So straight away he cried out, "Rs. 5, once," in a very low voice.

"Rs. 12," came another bid.

"Rs. 20" and "Rs. 25" followed in quick succession.

"Rs. 25, once; Rs. 25, twice; shall I let it go?" he asked and paused for a reply.

"Rs. 25, thrice," he finished with that address.

When he held up the address presented by the Delhi citizens, it was greeted with cheers. The bid began with Rs. 10 and rose rapidly. A member of the Japanese delegation, then in Delhi, competed with Indians and I was afraid there would be a "out-throat" competition. "Rs. 30, Rs. 40, Rs. 50, Rs. 80..." Up went the bid. At every offer Gandhiji turned towards the place from where the voice came. The Jap bid came up to a hundred. But "Rs. 111," bid Mr. Ajit Prasad. He was rather piqued at the manner in which others tried to beat him. There was a roar of laughter at the determined manner in which he shouted out the bid. The resolve not to permit others to "rob" the city of its address, much less the Japanese competitor, was obvious in his tone. And he won.

There was a small box containing perfumes. There was simply a mad competition again, which kept the

old man laughing till his ribs ached. There was a small bag containing about two measures of *atta*. Gandhiji put it on the desk in front of him, for it was too heavy for him to hold up. A gentleman began with Rs. 10. But the bid rose to Rs. 12 and then to Rs. 20.

He cried out "Rs. 20, once; Rs. 20, twice." No, he could not be so hasty to dispose of it, for "Rs. 40" was the next bid.

"Make *roti* out of it and send it to Gandhiji and Harijans," suggested a friend to the person who got the *atta* bag.

Mrs. Brijlal Nehru of Lahore, who was the final bidder, laughed pleasantly in response.

Another article took the prospective bidders by surprise. Gandhiji introduced: "Here is a pair of gold armlets. These were presented as donation for the Harijan uplift fund by a Bengali lady at Saugor, C. P. The market value will be Rs. 350 at the least." Without much ado and no competition Rao Sahab Iqbal Narendra Singh bought it for Rs. 350.

The loud speaker did not work satisfactorily and so during the later part of the auction the audience became restive. The only course to prevent utter confusion in this huge meeting was to dissolve it. Gandhiji beckoned the crowd to disperse peacefully.

Love and Devotion

At the Sehagpur public meeting, after Gandhiji's speech was over, many among the audience came to present him with jewels and money. The head of the sweeper community came to the top of the steps leading to the platform, when Gandhiji was told of it. Turning to him, Gandhiji said eagerly: "Come along, brother, come

right up." He accepted his present thankfully, saying repeatedly : " Come along, very well."

A middle-aged man came on to the platform, but stood at a distance with something in his hand. Gandhiji, knowing the visitor's intention, asked : " Do you want to present it ? "

He accepted the gift.

A blind man, aged nearly 60, was helped to the platform. As he came near, he asked of the Mahatma, " Where are your feet ? "

Gandhiji, stretching his left hand to him, said, " Le lo " (Take it).

When the blind man found out that it was not the leg, he requested again, " Where are your feet ? "

" What will you do with the feet ? Here is my hand, take it."

" I want to touch your feet," the blind man pleaded, with the sense of disappointment overpowering him.

His request was too touching to be resisted ; and Gandhiji could not harden his heart to refuse the man his prayer.

An old woman of over 80 years came to look into Mahatmaji's face.

" Come along, mother," he invited. She came quite near.

" You are older than I," he said bursting into a laughter. " You adopt me as your son."

She stood smiling. Immediately he asked, " Give me money. I want money for Harijan uplift. "

A child came to do *samaskar*.

" Well, come along," Gandhiji invited him and gave him a beautiful *khand* garland.

Caution

At Burhanpur people were very eager to see Gandhiji at close quarters. While returning from the meeting, he stood up in the motor car to enable them to see him. This acted as a brake on the crowd, which was surging towards the car. When the car had gained speed, the people were running about to take up positions of vantage on the roadside. He was, probably, nervous. "Slow, slow," he told the driver, when they ran ahead of the car.

At one time the road was clear and he advised, "Go fast now."

"Why do you run after the car? Please stop," he advised the children.

"Mahatma Gaddhi-ki-Jai," they shouted and stopped.

Prayer

At Burhanpur Railway Station, on the platform, under a margosa tree, Gandhiji was sitting on a lounge. There was yet some time for the train to arrive.

"You please be silent," he said to those who were standing close by. There was a crowd of people round him.

"I shall collect donations," he added. "Those who want to give can give now two annas, one rupee."

This is the largest amount he has asked of any individual donor so far. The collection was over in a few minutes.

"We will now pray," he said again. "Shut your eyes for five minutes and concentrate your thoughts on God."

A hurricane lantern was there. Its wick was lowered.

As the prayer was about to begin, the goods train standing near began to move.

"Will this go away now?" he asked.

"Yes," answered many by-standers simultaneously.

He recited a *sloka* and after that began the *Bhajan* song

Raghupati Raghava Rajaram,

Patita pavana Sitaram.

After prayer, once more he appealed: "I see there are new-comers. All those who have not yet contributed towards the Harijan fund and the new-comers can give something now."

There was good response.

A Girl's Gift

At the Bhopal meeting seven girls sang a Sanskrit song in praise of Gandhiji, and among those that came to put their presents into his hands was the girl who led the chorus. As she put flowers into his hand, he asked her: "Why don't you present your ring to the Harijan fund?"

"Yes, I give it now," she said trying to take it off her finger on the left hand.

"No, please don't. Your mother or father will question you, if you give it away."

"No, sir, they won't question me," she replied.

"Never mind, you keep the ring for yourself," he told her.

She hung her head to the right. She put on a long face. She felt awfully disappointed when he would not take her gift. She pleaded.

He said: "Give it then."

She could not remove it from her finger. So she held out her hand to him. He tried his chance. But after pulling at the ring for a minute or two, he gave it up, saying, "Oh, hopeless."

She immediately came down the steps and asked a gentleman to remove the ring from the finger, but he also failed in his attempt. But she was determined to present it. So water was brought and she put her finger in it. When it contracted, the ring was taken off. Immediately she climbed up the platform and gave the ring to Mahatmaji. She looked very pleased when he accepted it.

Her name is Shantahai.

Threat to Jhansi

At Jhansi the public meeting was held at about 7 o'clock at night. There was practically no volunteer organisation worth mentioning. There was no pathway to go to the platform.

Gandhiji was lifted on to the platform, as there were no steps to climb. As he sat down, the crowd began to hem in on all sides. Those who were sitting near the platform, in their eagerness to avoid being trampled down, rose to their feet. There was utter confusion. The crowd closed in.

"Please, less noise," he shouted beckoning the people to sit down. He turned from one side to the other crying aloud, "Sit down."

The situation worsened.

"In this noise I don't think I can do my work," he shouted standing up. "I can't speak standing. Please sit down and be silent."

Here and there some people sat down.

"If all of you don't sit down, I shall have to go away," he warned them. He was shivering in the cold night. "I am unwell and have not the strength to stand up."

The crowd hushed down.

"Shall I sit down and proceed with the work?," he asked.

"Mahatma Gandhi-ki-Jai," came the answer.

Then he began his speech and there was absolute silence.

Englishmen Introduced

"This is the gentleman who put us in jail last time," introduced Mr. Abhayankar, pointing to an Englishman who came along with him into Gandhiji's compartment, when the train stopped at Nagpur on his way to Bezwada from Delhi.

"Ahi ahi ahi!" laughed Gandhiji. "May I know who he is?"

"He's Mr. Grigson, the retiring Deputy Commissioner."

"This is the gentleman who will put us in jail next time," said Mr. Abhayankar again introducing another Englishman. "He succeeds Mr. Grigson as Deputy Commissioner."

"Well, well," said Gandhiji bursting into a fresh laughter.

"Is there no C. I. D. here?" he asked after a short pause, which made all laugh heartily.

The two English officers were also introduced to Mr. Duncan Greenless, who was sitting on a bench opposite to Gandhiji.

The Central Board Meeting

At the meeting of the Central Board of the Harijan Sevak Sangh held at Delhi, the workers put many questions to Gandhiji with a view to clear their doubts.

Referring to the resolutions passed at the Coimbatore Conference, Mr. Halasium asked what steps should be taken by the Harijan workers with regard to the exercising of rights by Harijans for using tanks, wells, etc., declared open for the public by the Government.

Gandhiji replied that the problem was not peculiar to Madras alone. There were other provinces and Indian States where such order had been passed, but where the Harijans did not exercise their rights for fear of obstruction by the caste Hindus or economical and social boycott. He was sure that the time would soon come to enforce their rights; but it was not wisdom to seek remedy through courts of law. It rested primarily with the Provincial Committees to select the proper time. The workers must not sleep.

His Holiness Gosain, the President of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, Assam, narrated the sufferings of about six lakhs of Harijan coolies in the tea gardens, of whom a large number was unemployed. They had immigrated from various provinces and constituted a great problem in a province like Assam. He requested Gandhiji to give special attention to it and obtain adequate funds for carrying on educational and social welfare work among these coolies.

Gandhiji pointed out that an army of social workers was required to solve the problem. He, however, asked for statistics and promised to depute trained workers for the task. He assured His Holiness that funds

would always be found where the proper type of workers were engaged in such activities.

At the desire of the members of the Central Board, Gandhiji told them the way to carry on propaganda regarding the two Bills before the Assembly. He said that he was giving anxious thought to the matter and was quite sure that public opinion must be consolidated and it was the bounden duty of the Board to secure the passage of the Bills. But the members of the Board must not rub up the Sanatanists' opinion in the wrong way. Unfortunately, their opinion was neither intelligent nor consolidated. They did not take much trouble to study the problem; but they were in a state of excitement and anger, and wanted to exercise utter compulsion. Under these circumstances the workers of the Sangh must work very carefully. They ought to produce sound legal opinion favouring the measures and, therefore, all the existing associations which could speak on the legal aspect should be invited to give opinion. Hindu reform associations also must be asked to express themselves on the question.

Gandhiji added that he once thought of getting resolutions passed at the vast public meetings on his tour, where he was sure that the opinion would be overwhelmingly in favour. But, as he thought that that opinion would not be an intelligent one, he did not like to get it. What was wanted was the expression of well-considered Hindu opinion. He was looking forward with a great deal of pleasure for a stiff fight during his tour in Madras Presidency, where he also expected violent expression. He very much regretted that his Sanatanist opponents did not argue points calmly, nor did they allow their minds to be acted upon. He found very little substance or force in their arguments. They

did not know that he had a meticulous regard for their feelings.

Far above Expectation

Gandhiji went to address a meeting at Alipur, a suburb of Delhi. A high platform was erected and round it there was a wooden fence to prevent the crowd from rushing in. Loud speakers were also fitted up. But only about a thousand Harijans were present. He was told that he had come there much too early and a large number of persons were still expected. In fact, he had gone there when the grass was wet with dew.

As he was about to begin his speech, a Harijan climbed up the platform. "Here's *boy* for you," he said presenting a vegetable to the dietetic expert. "Acha! *hai* *hai*," acknowledged the guest, receiving the present with a smile.

"Here is yarn for you. I spun it myself," said the man showing it to him. His right hand fingers pointed to his chest, as he laid stress on the word *myself*.

"Well, give it," Gandhiji nodded welcome to the gift.

After speech, Gandhiji held up the *boy* for sale.

There was no bid.

"I put this on auction sale," he shouted.

"Two annas," started a bidder. There was silence for half a minute, when he looked this way and that.

"Will not the bid go up?" he asked.

"One rupee," "two rupees," came the shouts one after another quickly. There was joy now on his face.

"Two rupees, once," carried the auctioneer with satisfaction.

"Rs. 6," the bid rose. A minute had not elapsed before Rs. 7, 10, 11, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, and 45 raced away.

"Rs. 45, once. Shall I let the *bag* go? Rs. 45, twice. Shall I let the *bag* go?" He paused for a while. Mr. Dhald Singh Swarna clinched it at that.

The market price of the *bag* was half an anna.

Gandhiji was presented with a gold ring. As he held it up for sale, Shrimati Satyadevi showed some anxiety. She said to her friends in whispers, "It is to be auctioned at the ladies' meeting at Delhi." The whisper was loud enough to be heard by him. She was evidently afraid the ring would not fetch a reasonable price.

"This is a gold ring," Gandhiji proceeded.

She looked rather uneasy.

"Very well, the ring will be presented to him again to be auctioned at the ladies' meeting," suggested a gentleman to her.

A gentleman bought it for Rs. 50, which was far beyond her expectation; but he presented it to Gandhiji with the request to auction it at the ladies' meeting at Delhi.

Train Delayed

By now the ladies' section of the audience had grown to enormous size. At the Sahagpur, Haridwar, Khandwa, Bishnupur and Delhi meetings more than a thousand ladies were present. At Hirasad Railway Station, there were not less than 2,000 people, of whom 700 were women. On the station platform was put up a dala, on

which Gandhiji was expected to stand and address the people. But there was such a rush towards his compartment that it was not possible for him to come out. So he stood at the entrance of the compartment with his hands in the Hindu salutation posture in front of the face. People were greatly delighted to get his *darshan*. When a path was made in the crowd for the women to go near the compartment to see him at close quarters, they went up to him in double file. But all of them did not have the good luck to see him standing near, for the train began to move. It must be said that the train was delayed here for a long time for the benefit of the *darshan*-seekers.

New Year Greetings

New Year greetings to Gandhiji poured in from various quarters. A good many people, while wishing him a merry Christmas and a happy New Year, begged of him to send them his autograph. If these requests were to be complied with, he must have opened a special department for it. If all of them were not favoured with a reply, the tour programme was the excuse.

An American author, in the course of a lengthy letter, which was full of admiration and love for Gandhiji, wrote—

"I consider you one of the greatest men. . . . America could use a wonderful man like you. I promise you that my prayers will always remember you. God bless you for your kindness

"Wishing you a merry Christmas and a very happy New Year, I await with keen interest your personal and most respected reply."

Another American admirer wanted Gandhiji's autograph, which he wanted to put on his desk along with those of President Roosevelt, Rudyard Kipling, I. J. Paderewski, Albert Einstein, Col. Lindbergh, Amelia Earhart, H. M. King Carol, Crown Prince Wilhelm, Emperor Hirohito, President Lin Sen, etc.

A gentleman from Yugoslavia wrote for the autograph in humble terms.

An admirer at Genoa enclosed his own photograph for Gandhiji, saying that he and Gandhiji looked alike. He was, perhaps, endeavouring to live up to the Gandhian principle.

A Tamil poem in praise of Gandhiji and wishing him success was received. It was not signed. There were also New Year greetings from Andhradesh and Kannedesh.

In Andhradesh

THEY RAN AFTER HIM IN CROWDS

Gandhiji's tour in Andhradesh was remarkable in many ways. The reception given to him was as enthusiastic as that given elsewhere and at least in one town women volunteers were prominently active. "Andhras are no Scotsmen," he remarked frequently. He paid that tribute, because he had thought that they were a bit close fisted, on account of the poor support he received at first. If he found them generous to a fault, he did not exploit even the most enthusiastic among them. When Mr. Boddu Sitaramaswamy Chetty of Vijayanagaram offered to pay down Rs. 116 for every minute of Gandhiji's stay in his house, it was open to him to have quite a big sum for the Harijan fund, but the stay lasted only a few minutes.

When the train steamed into Berwada Station, Mr. Bulusu Sambamurty was seen standing among a huge crowd of people sitting quietly on the platform anxiously expecting Gandhiji. But to the disappointment of all, Gandhiji was smuggled away to Durga Vilas, Mr. K. Nageshwara Rao's residence. However, the public had no reason to complain, as he was taken later in a car through various streets.

In the main hazaar street an amusing incident occurred. The street was narrow, and it was made

narrower by the people who lined either side. Bulusu's car and another went ahead of the one in which Gandhiji and Mr. Nageshwara Rao were. The pilot car entered the street from the end that was farther away from Durga Vilas, while the Mahatma's car entered it from the other. Nobody knew of this comedy of errors until the cars came within sight of each other. Then the crowd was in an uproar. "Back," "Forward," came the shouts from hundreds of throats, and the cars got hemmed in in the roaring mass of humanity. But in a few minutes Bulusu backed his car, and inch by inch the cars fought their way to the end of the street.

It was only in Andhradesh that Gandhiji penetrated right into the rural parts. His car dragged itself along the clayish *poramboke*—which was dignified by the appellation of 'road' for the sake of the visitor—leading to Muchinoor village. Ditches and pits that were filled with water were covered with straw for the vehicles to jolt along. Gandhiji's labour was not in vain, for he saw a quiet crowd in front of a big temple. Sitting on the hood of the car that was drawn down, he began his speech with an expression of his unmingled joy in throwing open two temples at the same time for the use of Harijans and others.

At Gudivada, he stood on the platform like a fugitive, nonplussed at the sight of the mob but that mob came threatening with joyous shouts of "Jai" Above him on the banyan tree boys raised cries of *Bande mataram*, competing with the swaying crowd to increase the din. As he held the garland and the address in his hand, he quivered in the sound-wave.

At Siddhandam, he went into the temple of Durga Nageshwari and saw *diparathans* along with Harijan

brethren. Ladies came in large numbers to see him at his residence. It was inadvisable to permit them to go to see him as they wished. The crowd had to dwindle before permission could be given them to see him. There was only one way of scaring the crowd away. It was to levy a tax on their eagerness. When this intention was announced, many jumped at the bargain. Many a girl at once promised to fling her jewels in through the windows.

These ladies were seated in a hall, 50 ft. by 15 ft. This kindled the jealousy of the men, who volunteered to pay down the toll then and there. The hall was packed to the full. Strangest of all, about a dozen orthodox Brahmins also found their way in. The holy ashes and sandal paste on their forehead and their demeanour roused the suspicion that they were no taxpayers on the occasion. Within a minute of their entry there was such a murmur that they went out. A little later, suddenly there was dead silence which meant Gandhiji was coming down the stairs. He came quickly into the hall laughing "ha! ha! ha!" and in approval of the scene said, "Tat kar, tat kar" (That is right). "Put down" (put), ordered a lieutenant like a Thug, "Those who want to present the jewels, please do," said the hero confirming the order.

Immediately jewels clattered on a metal plate. Blue, red, orange, yellow, black, white and purple saris rustled. Veeramma, Anjamma, Sesamma, Pitchamma, Narasamma and a host of others stood gaping for a moment at the man whose words charmed so sweetly as to tempt them to dispossess themselves of their ornaments. In three minutes there was a heap of bangles, rings, necklaces and bracelets. While the women were putting their donations into the plate, he turned

to the men behind saying, "Give, give." They forthwith placed their presents in the hollow of his right hand. In the meantime the Brahmins had found their way in. Two Harijans presented him each with a small packet of betel leaves. "*Sas, sas,*" he said in a comforting and cheering tone and thanked them. As he examined the betel leaves, his face beamed with joy. There was a rupee in each packet. In this happy confusion Miss Miraben collected some money and brought it to the master, who received it with a hearty laugh.

Unpleasant Contrast

Gandhiji had a pleasant drive through the streets of Masulipatam. The people seemed to regard his appearance as an event of daily occurrence. The broad streets looked broader as the passers-by never showed any signs of perturbation. In fact, this is the only place where he had the privilege to drive fast till he reached his destination, the Hindu Jatiya Kolasala (National College).

Noise began when the first address was read at the public meeting. The Municipal Chairman, who was in non-deskender European dress, read the Municipal address, which was in Telugu. When he was reading it, beautiful *khadi* carpets and a *khadi* silk were presented to the guest with short commentaries on them. The Kistna Board presented a charmingly well-framed Hindi address.

In answer to a question put by Gandhiji, a gentleman with a broad Vaishnavite mark on his forehead, pointing to the gap in his teeth, pleaded: "I'm an old man, you see, how can I work?"

"Ah!" exclaimed Gandhiji and opened his own mouth. "You see," he boasted, pulling his lower lip to enable the gentleman to have a good view of the gulfs wrought by the efflux of time. "What do you say?" his expression seemed to ask.

Gandhiji had asked him why he did not collect more money.

When he began his speech, noise subsided a little, but soon it grew more and more. In spite of it, he continued: "You see here is a *Khad* *Bhandar*. Instead of making a long speech, I want to do some business now."

"This costs Rs. 100," he said, holding up the District Board address. He placed it facing the audience and added, "This cannot be in a Harijan Sevak's house. Now begin."

There was no bid. Meanwhile he sent lady volunteers to collect money in the ladies' section.

"Don't you begin?" he shouted aloud. "I put articles on auction sale in every city."

There was still no response.

"Well, do any one of you bid?" His voice was lost in the uproar. He kept quiet. When silence was being requested, he examined a beautiful table cloth. The noise did not subside. The ladies stood up and the children began to cry. The volunteers were not able to restore tranquillity. In the end, the crowd was so noisy that he quitted the platform. But still the shouts rose "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-Jai." This scene was in very unpleasant contrast to that witnessed while driving in the streets earlier in the day.

Swamini

Ramayogini of Kurumaddali came to see the Mahatma at his residence. She embraced him. "What brought you here?" he asked.

"You are always in my heart," she said, "and you have me in yours."

"Raise the Harijans," he requested her in turn.

It was a solemn scene.

She is a Harijan *saxumlar*. Her words filter through her teeth. It is reported that quite often for days together she is in a state of *samadhi*. Fifteen years ago she was a coolie in that village. Her name was then Pitchamma.

Rounds in Madras City

Gandhiji spent a good portion of his time in Madras City visiting Harijan quarters with Mr. K. Nageshwara Rao. At Arundudipuram Harijan boys and girls sang his favourite song, *Vandhana Janate tena kahiye*, to which he listened with rapt attention, sitting in the car on the roadside. The Bharat Sabha at Teyanampet gave him a cheery reception. As the car could not go very near the platform, he used it as the platform. He looked round and, pointing to a group in the crowd, instructed, "Let the girls come here." When they went near the car, he exclaimed with a happy smile: "There you are! There you are!"

Some of the girls looked bashful.

"Ga-o" (sing), he started them.

In a few minutes he expressed his satisfaction in Tamil, "*Chuday, Chuday*" (enough, enough).

Here he got two purses amounting to Rs. 720, a gold-ring and Rs. 10 from auction sale.

At Pallakkomanipalayam, Mylapore, a Swamiji read the address standing in the crowd, and his voice was not quite audible to Gandhiji. "Why don't you stand on the foot-board of the car?" he asked. When the address was over, he remarked in astonishment "Finished!" It was very brief.

"Just a few words, please," the Swamiji requested the visitor.

"Just a few words!" Gandhiji echoed with a merry laugh and began: "It has been a great pleasure to me to go round the *cheries*. And it has been a greater pleasure that I end the rounds here. I know the valuable work done by the Sri Ramakrishna Mutt (Applause). This is a movement of self-purification. I am hoping and praying that all Hindus, young and old, men and women, will take part in this."

On the wayside when Gandhiji was going to the Damodar Gardens, Harijan children stood in rows and sang the *Bhajan* song: *Paki maham dekhi Sri Krishna Krishna*. The lover of the *Gita* listened to it with devotion.

At the Damodar Gardens his car stopped at a turning, when Mrs. Hilda Wood approached.

"Are you not Mrs. Wood?" Gandhiji asked her. She was surprised and laughed in affirmation.

"You are just to touch the camphor flame," she told him when a man brought it.

"Yes."

"Come on quickly," she hastened the man.

"*Buz, buz*," said he, acknowledging the offer.

He helped her on to the seat next to him.

He went round the Tiruvati Amman Koi, with his hands in worshipful posture.

When he went into the Montessori School, he lifted up the chin of a Harijan child, who was sitting on the floor and said: "Blow your nose clean." He had a cold. Another child also had the joy of being patted by him. Other children looked enviously at them.

He was shown the text-books, stencils, etc. "This looks much better, is it not?" asked Mrs. Wood. "Yes certainly."

Gandhiji left his slippers outside, as he entered the temple. When he was presented with the camphor flame that was offered to the deity, he moved his hands over it and transmitted the efficacy of the *prasad* to his eyes. He was shown the idol that was worshipped formerly but was now relegated to a corner. He peeped into the sanctum sanctorum with childlike curiosity to see it properly.

"Here's your little throne," said Mrs. Hilda Wood, pointing to the cushion on a platform. He laughed but did not look flattered.

He spoke: "I was looking forward to this brief visit. Perhaps, the children do not know this is not my first visit to Adyar. When Dr. Besant was alive and vigorous, I had the pleasure of visiting what was then called a Panchama school. We are looking forward to a time when there will be no distinction between caste Hindus and others, when we shall be simply Hindus."

Gandhiji was given Rs. 20 by an anonymous sympathiser for distribution of sweets to Harijan children. When he was told the donor's wishes, he said: "Sweets to little children need not be sweets. I hope Mrs. Wood will use it for a better purpose."

At Munippali village, Guntur, when his car stopped on the road, a lady climbed upon the foot-board and quietly put on his neck a *khadi* piece like a garland. Others imitated her. A man pressed upon him a plateful of fruit and flowers. Another man heaped *khadi* yarn on his lap. The recipient had a hard time. On enquiry I ascertained that the villagers had been told to present Gandhiji with anything they liked.

When his car had gone by a few yards, the workers who were metalling the road near the village of Ponnur, learnt that the bare-headed man in it was Mahatma Gandhi. Down they put their pick-axes, spades and other tools and ran after him.

At the *Astraw* in Nidburole a meeting was held, which was orderly and quiet, and, therefore, he made a long speech, in the course of which he said: "A time will soon come, not a thousand years hence, when Harijans will help the Savarnas from the mire into which they are sinking."

After the speech, he said: "I want somebody to buy this silver cup and gold *takli*. I have not much time to lose.

A Harijan immediately offered Rs. 6 for them.

"He is a Harijan Ayurvedic doctor," informed a by-stander.

"Come along, brother," Gandhiji invited him, and added smiling: "If I'm ill, I shall come to you for medicine" (Laughter).

He continued: "I know there are some good Ayurvedic doctors among Harijans and they are rich too."

At Ittanagarampedu, the meeting was held at night and it was very noisy. So Gandhiji realized only a little

money by auction sale. A large picture of V.J. Patel went for a song, and a group of ten addresses presented by different associations were sold off for Rs. 3. He held up a silver plate and a silver scented-stick stand together. He offered to give them away for Rs. 35.

There was no response

"Tell them," he told Mr. Bapineedu, "the intrinsic value is certainly more than Rs. 35"

There was only noise.

"Nobody bids?" he asked Mr. Bapineedu, who looked helpless.

"Withdrawn," he remarked taking the articles back from Mr. Bapineedu.

At about 11 o'clock on the 24th of December, Gandhiji arrived at Samalkot, where Mr. Bulusu Sambamurty received him. He got down from the train and hurried with Bulusu to the car that stood outside the station. Although there was a fairly large crowd, there was no noise and a broad and straight path was kept open for him.

At Peddapuram he unexpectedly met a quiet audience. He began his speech with an appreciation of the crowd's behaviour, which must have been flattering to any organizer.

A Meeting in Rain

At Cocanada, the lady volunteers in orange coloured saris were prominent. So far since the beginning of the tour, in Delhi and here only were they noticeably engaged in keeping order.

When Gandhiji sat spinning in his residence, a musician played on the *Veena*. Harijan students, both boys and girls, were introduced to him. The boys presented their handicrafts to their benefactor, which were

lakh, pins, etc. He presented them with fruits and flowers.

The ladies' meeting at Cocanada was praiseworthy. There was an audience of about 2,000. Just five minutes before Gandhiji arrived, it began to drizzle. When he reached the platform, heavy rain set in, but the ladies calmly kept their seats. He began his speech in Hindi: "Sisters!" The rain that pattered on the palmyra leaf *pandal* added immensely to the noise. In spite of it, he made a speech in a very loud voice. He concluded: "Those who want to contribute to the Harijan fund can now give money and jewels. God will bless you." A lady, who was drenched to the skin, immediately came forward and put a five-rupee note into his hand.

"Speak to Whom?"

At Rajahmundry, the public meeting was held at night. The platform was brilliantly lighted. Gandhiji was in a jovial mood. Mr. N. Subbarao Pantulu bought a *khesi* upper cloth for Rs. 30. Gandhiji put it on his neck like a garland, put his left hand round him and hugged him affectionally, as a mark of appreciation and thanksgiving to the successful bidder.

When the auction was over, Mr. Bulusu Sambamurty said to Gandhiji, "You must speak."

"Speak to whom?" asked Gandhiji. "There are so many speakers" (Laughter).

The Chess-box

After the meeting Gandhiji went to the Godavari ferry. While he was sitting on the deck in the steam launch, a young man came to him with a request for his

autograph in Telugu. Gandhiji turned to Balusu for help. The latter wrote "Gandhi" in Telugu on a piece of paper, and the Mahatma traced his pen on it and gave the autograph to the young man.

"So I've learnt how to write my signature in Telugu," he said to his comrade with some satisfaction.

The young man: "It is artistic."

Gandhiji, laughing: "Not otherwise?"

The youngman took out a small chess-box, when Balusu asked; "Do you want to present it to him?"

"Who knows how to play?" put in Gandhiji.

"I know," informed Balusu.

"Then I must be afraid of you."

"No, no," laughed Balusu innocently. Emptying the box on the carpet that was spread on the deck, he said, picking out some pieces, "These are men."

"Ah! the men fly," laughed the Satyagraha leader, as the pieces rolled on the floor.

While explaining which was which among the pieces, Balusu said: "These are kings. These are queens."

Gandhiji: "Oh, you make the kings then! I will get the men."

When the young man went away, Gandhiji remarked in surprise, "O he has left the chess-box! Please return it to him."

A minute had not elapsed after the interesting talk when Mahatmaji said, "Now begins my silence." And he retired into the cabin.

Early next morning the launch left the ferry and went up the river to Sitanagaram. On landing, Gandhiji walked to the Satyagraha Ashram.

Launch Stranded in the River

The steam launch *Prabhakaraw*, which took Gandhiji from Sitanagaram to Tallapudi, stranded on the bed of the Godavari, when it was nearing its destination. A large number of persons were on board the vessel, and the weight was too great.

The *Prabhakaraw* was decorated with coconut and mango leaves. She left the Sitanagaram bank amidst cheers and a salute of crackers. To her was attached a smaller vessel, in which Gandhiji and party were seated. While the two vessels were approaching the Tallapudi bank, a small vessel that had gone to the other bank in advance returned at top-speed to warn that danger was ahead. A boatman from it came over to the *Prabhakaraw* to steer her clear off the shallows. But then it was too late. For the *Prabhakaraw* was stranded about 300 yards from the shore. An attempt was made in vain to get the steam launch off and proceed.

At this time Gandhiji was talking with interest to Mr. Bulusu Sambamurty in his cabin. The passengers on the *Prabhakaraw* were eager to look at him and so crowded on that part of the vessel which was overlooking his cabin.

When it was found that the launch could not proceed further, the smaller vessel was detached and it went to the bank safely. Many were transhipped. The boatmen and some others jumped into the river, which was knee deep there, and tried to jack it out of the sand with bamboos; but that did not succeed. After nearly two hours, the party's luggage was brought to the Tallapudi bank in another vessel. It was then ten o'clock at night.

Owing to some mistake on the part of the hosts, a member or two of the party with the luggage reached Tanuku at about 3 o'clock next morning. When they reached Gandhiji's residence, he was awake and had already begun his morning duties. He was cleaning his teeth. He listened to the nocturnal adventure attentively and told the narrator: "It's time for you to go to bed."

He had then begun his day's business. He sat on a mat that was spread on the floor in his room. A small desk was in front of him, on which his papers were put, his watch and a clock. There was also a glass of water. The room was dimly lighted by a hurricane lantern, which was also placed on the desk. He attended to his correspondence, while in the adjoining hall younger men snored.

Translator Indeed!

The public meeting at Tanuku was held on the District Board High School grounds.

"What's the purse?" asked Gandhiji, when it was given.

"Rs. 400," came the reply.

He began, "Friends!" and asked, "Is no translation necessary?"

"Hindi, please, Hindi," requested a few young men. "*Kya sab Samajenge?*" (Will all of you understand?).

At this time there was some talk still on the platform and suddenly he returned to the old question, "But where is the purse?"

A little later somebody gave him Rs. 100, when he enquired with great pleasure, "*Apta nam kya hai?*" (What is your name?).

Gandhiji began again "Friends!" and then a man came near the platform to translate.

"Hindi, Hindi," requested a number of voices again.

He turned to the translator and queried, "Do you understand Hindi well?"

The man nodded his head and looked intelligent. Making sure of the translator's ability, the speaker began "*Bhayaee!*" (Brothers!)

Just then a man put a small leather purse into his hands.

"I'll take the rupees but you return the purse to the owner," Gandhiji told him.

That gentleman said to him: "Please spend two minutes at the end to collect money."

"Two minutes!" he exclaimed and forthwith ordered, "Volunteers, please go to collect money."

Turning to the ladies, he added in Hindi in the same breath; "Those who want to present rings please do so now."

When he resumed his speech, the first sentence was: "A gentleman has put me a long question." The second sentence was translated thus: "Before he puts the question to me he must read it."

"Sit down, sit down," shouted a number of voices.

The translator looked confused.

Gandhiji helped: "Before he put the question, he must have read what I have written and spoken elsewhere."

Another translator was tried and he too was found wanting. So Gandhiji rendered his Hindi speech into English, which was translated into Telugu.

On the wayside from Tanuku to Poduru crowds of people were waiting in many places to get his *darshan*,

but, as he was sleeping in the car, he had to disappoint them. At Poduru he stood on his seat in the car and addressed the audience. Near Palakol a few people were sitting in a bullock cart, who had come there with the sole purpose of presenting him a five-rupee note.

The Ellore ladies planned to present purses to him individually. They came one after another and gave him bags, small and big, full of money. A woman who came with an infant in arms gave him a bangle. Another woman came and stood on the steps leading to the platform. He stretched out his hand towards her, evidently unconscious of what he did, and immediately she put a jewel in to his hand. He laughed quietly for having won such an easy victory. Another woman presented him with a pair of bangles and touched his feet with her forehead.

Backward or Forward Tract ?

On the way to Vizagapatam, as the train steamed into Tadepallegudam Station, a young man came running towards Gandhiji's compartment and gave him a flower.

"What's the use of a rose?" asked the recipient.
"Can I do Harijan work with roses?"

Another man presented him a peacock-feather fan, which was at once put up for auction. As he fanned himself with it to show its use, "1½ annas" came the bid.

"This is a backward tract," he remarked.

"Rupee one," offered another.

"Rupee," he nodded his head in approval.

A man corrected the auctioneer saying, "one rupee."

"I thought it was *ready rupee*" (Rs. 2), Gandhiji joked.

"*Oru annai*" (once), said he in Tamil, which was lost in the general laughter.

"Rs. 5," the bid rose.

"Oh, this is not a backward tract at all. This is a forward tract," concluded the Mahatma in appreciation of the bid.

After the auction, he sold an autograph for Rs. 5 and another for a gold bangle. "This is not a backward tract but a forward tract," he certified again.

At Rajahmundry Station a ring made of coconut-shell, which was set with a precious stone, was presented to him. As usual he auctioned it and the bid rose to a rupee and a half. "It is better, but you must give more than Rs. 2. This is more beautiful than a gold ring," he remarked, putting it on his forefinger and showing it to all.

"Two eight," rose the bid again.

A gold ring was presented to him.

"I can't wear this," he said casting a sort of mischievous look at it. "If I wear this, I must marry again. What will the old woman in the Yerrawada Jail think?" (Laughter).

Children's Gift

At the ladies' public meeting at Vizag, a small girl garlanded him with *kandi* yarn. He caught hold of her hand, asked her to surrender her bangles and stroked her cheek affectionately. As she turned to her father unwilling to disoblige the Mahatma, her father said to him: "She wants you to take."

"You mean all the bangles?" was Gandhi's query (Laughter).

"One," the father replied.

Another child of eight years came and stood near him. He gave her a bouquet. She asked him to take a bangle off her hand, and held out her right hand to him. She pointed at her mother, who was sitting at a distance, to show that she had given her permission.

At the public meeting held on the beach, a picture of Mahatmajī drawn by a student was presented to him. Looking at it for a few seconds, he remarked: "This is not I at this age." In fact, the likeness was not good.

When national songs were being sung, he sold autographs. The price was Rs. 5 that day. A young man begged him to give him the autograph for Rs. 1-0-3. He pleaded his inability to pay more, as he had been released just a few days ago from prison. Gandhi obliged him.

Miser!

Bhimlipatam was the best decorated place but the purse contained only Rs. 200. When he was told that, he said: "Put Rs. 32 more. The purse must be Rs. 116, Rs. 232, Rs. 348 and so on."

The custom in Andhradesh is to present a purse of Rs. 116, which is supposed to be a lucky number, or any multiple thereof.

A man offered a gold sovereign to Gandhi, if he would stand up on the platform to enable the audience to have a better look at him. Readily he consented.

An old lady presented him with a ring. "Why not all your rings and bangles," he asked.

She wore a number of gold bangles, rings and a wrist watch. She covered them immediately with her saree, and he laughed, "miser, miser."

Some one presented him with a walkingstick. "I can't have a stick," he said holding it up. "Somebody will say that I've become violent. So I must dispense with it. Bid now."

Vijayanagaram

The Vijayanagaram public meeting was the largest and quietest in Andhradesh. It was, perhaps, the best so far in the tour. There was a gathering of 40,000. This was certainly the largest meeting held there. Hundreds of people came to the city from neighbouring villages when they heard that the Maharajah himself had agreed to entertain Gandhiji as his guest. The Police and the volunteers worked in harmony in maintaining order.

When the citizens' purse was presented at Anakapalle, Gandhiji enquired: "What's the purse?"

"Rs. 560," came the answer.

"Bad, Anakapalle to give Rs 560," he said. "I feel like leaving the place."

"If you address the ladies," the District Secretary suggested, "they might give you something."

"Yes, I will," he agreed and shook his head like a naughty boy saying "they might, they might."

But the response was not very good.

A Task for Bulusu

When Mr. Bulusu Sambamurty entered Gandhiji's compartment at Tanj, Mr. Bapineedu told him:

"Vizagapatam has beaten East Godavari. It has given Rs. 7,000."

"Very well," Bulusu took it coolly.

"No very well," Gandhiji broke in, "you must also give 7,000."

"I shall give any amount you want."

After a few minutes, Bulusu asked Gandhiji, "Ho, you want me to collect 7,000?" Doubt seemed to lurk still in him.

"Yes," came the order, mildly.

"So you want me to be a Harijan worker till Rs. 7,000 is collected.

"Yes,"

"After that?"

"Collect Rs. 7,000," Gandhiji gave no room for further questions.

After a little more talk, Bulusu asked: "After I have collected 7,000, shall I be free?"

"Yes," said Gandhiji and added, "but collect in seven days."

Bulusu pleaded: "Oh! I have to preside over a conference shortly."

"If you had stayed on at the ladies' meeting at Gootanada," he added in defence of East Godavari, "you would have got Rs 7,000."

Before the conversation had ended, the train reached Pithapuram. A large crowd madly rushed towards Gandhiji's compartment shouting "Rs 204, Rs 204." He left his seat and stood at the entrance.

"*Dabbe, dabbe*" (money, money), he also shouted adding to the noise and leaned out through the window to collect donations.

Asirvata Mantras

At Samalkot a lady tried to garland him but he snatched it away and demanded, "bangles, bangles." Bulusu gave her the Telugu equivalent of the word. At once she gave him one. Others followed suit.

Just at this time four Brahmins entered the compartment. They sat in front of Gandhiji and began to recite *mantras* in Sanskrit. In a second or two the crowd outside was hushed. All eyes were now on the Brahmins, the *mantras* rang out sonorously in the compartment. One of the four Vedic scholars had *kundalon* (ear-ring), which showed that he had performed *yagam* (sacrifice). Gandhiji listened to them attentively. When they had finished the *Asirvata mantras* (blessing), he presented them with oranges. Bulusu informed him that they were learned scholars.

Her Last Jewel

After this incident Gandhiji asked a lady to give him her bangle. Srimati Durgabai tried to remove it from the wearer's hand but, turning to him, said: "It does not come off."

"Try," he encouraged.

It was taken off and presented to the Mahatma. The lady was Mrs. Samhamurty.

Bulusu, who had got down from the train in the meantime, said to Gandhiji, "Tell her not to replace it."

"That is the condition," Gandhiji said in agreement.

"This was the last jewel on her body," Bulusu added. "She has sold away the rest."

Gandhiji referred to another lady who had given away all her jewels.

Old Lady's Present

The Nellore District tour was, indeed, a pleasant one. Special mention must be made of the large collection and also of the disciplined way in which meetings were conducted. The tour began at Kavli, where he assured the public that the money collected for Harijan uplift would not be spent on other activities.

At the Bitchureddypalayam ladies' meeting, a girl named Shakuntala gave him bangles, standing an arm's length away. Stroking her cheek in fun, he exclaimed: "A little girl gives jewels!"

A number of ladies presented him with currency notes. "*Nagala*" (jewels), he repeated his demand. "All are giving notes but I want *sopala*."

Little Shakuntala made another present; it was Rs. 118. When she came near him for the third time, it was to garland him. As she lifted the garland up in her hand, he put his right hand through it and pushed her head inside it so that it might fall on her shoulders. She looked discomfited and left the garland in his hand. She again came to make another present, but he was in such a playful mood that she dared not come close to him.

An old lady of 90 years, who was half-blind and unable to walk, gave him two gold bangles. She touched his feet.

"You are older than I," said he. "You have done the right thing. The money is going to be spent for Harijan uplift."

"I request you for a message," petitioned a middle-aged lady.

"I want money."

At once she took her gold necklace and presented him with it.

"Good!" he exclaimed as he put it on like a garland. "Shall I go about wearing this? Ha! ha! ha!" he laughed.

Janakashram

The Palakol public meeting was orderly. There were about 3,000 people present, all of whom had come there after bathing and with caste-marks on their forehead. For it was Vaikunta Ekadasi Day.

Gandbiji was given a gold trowel to lay the foundation-stone of the Harijan Ashram. A gentleman informed the guest, pointing to a place at a distance: "There was objection to laying the foundation-stone there. So, please lay it here."

"Yes, I will lay it here," he readily agreed.

Before he began his speech, a silver bowl, with a silver flag attached on the top of it, was presented to him. He looked at it for a minute and asked, laughing: "This is for drinking wine, or for what?" (Laughter).

He began: "I lay the foundation-stone of the Janakashram. This is the foundation-slab." He pointed at a marble slab, on which details were inscribed in Telugu. He continued: "I hope this Ashram will be the abode of peace and safety for Harijana. I am sorry I cannot give more time to you."

He held up the trowel for sale and began: "Will you please bid for this."

"What is this?" he asked immediately.

"This is one sovereign," informed a gentleman, who was sitting near by.

"You are a real Banis," Gandhiji laughed. "You are making money out of the *Ashraw*."

For the trowel there was only one bid and it was Rs. 100.

"What about this ?" he asked, taking the silver cup next.

There was no response immediately.

"Who bids ? I will give it away for a quarter of an anna."

There was still delay.

"I start with a quarter anna."

Up the bid went to Rs. 50 in less than three minutes.

"Rs. 50, once," shouted the auctioneer. "Cash down for delivery of article, distinct." There was laughter and he himself joined the rest in enjoying the joke. The bid again rose to Rs. 75, by stages.

"Rs. 75," cried the Captain of the Volunteer Corps from the audience. It was the stentorian voice of an old friend, Mr. Vallari Rama Rao.

"Rs. 80," offered another.

"*Assi rupiya ek bar*," hastened Gandhiji, but checked himself saying, "You can go up to Rs. 100 now."

Presentation of Jewels

At the Bhimavaram public meeting, when he began his speech, ladies came to the platform to present loose gold coins that were removed then and there from their necklaces, gold rings, bangles and silver anklets. Over a hundred ladies, including Brahmin widows, came one after another to offer their homage. He stopped his speech and sat quiet. The crowd surged towards the platform. An old lady harangued in admiration, when he

said "hai, hai" (enough, enough) to show that he had understood her. When a lady came up the steps hesitating, another prevented her. "Let her come," Gandhiji intervened. In the end, he went away without making a speech.

We Shall Clean the Lavatory

At Bhimadol Station, Gandhiji stood at the entrance of the compartment and gave *darshan* to the people and collected donations.

The Station Master, who had been rung up from a previous station, told Gandhiji: "I have sent for the sweeper."

"You can give us the broom-stick and water, and we shall clean it in no time." Gandhiji had hardly finished saying so when two scavengers came there to clean the lavatory.

Have You a Drug to Cure Untouchability?

The Ellore Harijans had the pride and privilege of having Mahatmaji in their street for nearly 40 minutes. This is the only place that snatched away such a large portion of his time since the beginning of the tour. At about half past six in the evening he went there. As he entered the street, the Harijan volunteers presented him the guard of honour. He sat on the platform and began his enquiry. Mr. Bapinseda introduced the Harijan workers to him.

A little girl sang *Bharat hamara desh hai*, to which he listened with a smile. He affectionately patted the child, whose face beamed with joy.

Gandhiji was informed that there was an Ayurvedic dispensary.

"What medicines have you?" he asked.

"Ayurvedic and homeopathic."

"Do you manufacture the medicines?"

"Some."

At this time the wife of Mr. Devendrudu came. She was introduced to Gandhiji and he was told that Mr. Devendrudu was not well. "I'm sorry to hear it," said he, much concerned.

The Harijan Ayurvedic doctor was introduced to him, whom he asked: "Have you not found out a drug to cure untouchability?"

There was laughter.

A little girl did *sawastor* to the Mahatma.

"In what class are you reading?" he enquired of her.

"Fourth class," answered somebody.

"I thought so," he remarked with a knowing wink.

When college and school students were introduced, he said: "If I had time, I would examine these students."

Reformation

Mr. V. Krishnamurty, the Secretary of the Depressed Classes Mission, gave the visitor a brief account of the uplift work in Ellora. Gandhiji listened to it with much interest, repeatedly saying "I see." In the end he asked: "Does anybody drink?"

"No," answered the Secretary.

"Not even old men?"

"Yes, some old men."

"Have they all given up eating carrion?"

"Some old people still eat."

"Do they eat beef?"

"Some."

Gandhiji was informed that some of them had become pure vegetarians.

"How many?" came the anxious query.

"Four families."

"Andhradesh does not contain more than half a dozen vegetarians!" he exclaimed.

He was told that there were 300 Harijan volunteers in the town.

"I see, good," he certified.

Another information was that there was a *Saadrahi* shop.

"Not *Khandi*!" laughed the great spinner.

"No."

"I know, I know," he repeated, laughing.

The whole conversation was summarised for the audience in Telugu.

Booker T. Washington as Example

A student then made a request: "Please give the money collected in Andhradesh to Harijan students for their boarding and fees. Please finance with that money the students who want to go abroad."

Gandhiji replied in a sympathetic tone: "There is no difficulty in spending the money on boarding and fees, if there are deserving students. It is not easy to run boarding houses. The Harijan boarding house in Poona is an ideal one. But I don't know whether there are others like that. You have only to put forward a proper scheme and the money will be granted."

"But it is a difficult proposition," he continued, "when you say that money should be spent on students going abroad for education. I don't say education abroad must not be encouraged. But I think it will be unwise to encourage going abroad, for it will not serve the purpose. What is required is to copy Booker T. Washington. You can treat him as a model. He is a universal model. Don't think of going abroad. You have not two Ambedkars in India, but only one. I know Dr. Ambedkar was sent abroad for higher studies by Sir Manubhai Mehta. Baroda has also financed him in his enterprise. But, if anybody has the ability of Dr. Ambedkar, I will send him to Europe. I am not the person who will clip your wings. Our salvation lies in purity of thought and action. Don't cut yourself from your moorings and surroundings. Learn technology. I am prepared to help the students in that direction and am prepared to get them good jobs also. We must capture the leather trade."

Gandhiji then spoke highly of the skill of a Harijan in his Ashram, who was an expert in tanning. He wound up, saying: "Doctors do not perform operations as skilfully as Harijans do operations on carcasses, for they have the experience of a life-time."

Proceeding, he said: "I want to know how many Harijans can become barristers. But, if you had a technological department, you could do much for the community."

He then referred to Mr. Madhusudhan Das's work in Orissa and concluded with a touch of autobiography. "I will be the last person to prevent you from flying to Himalayan heights. I applied my principles to my sons, and I did not send them to Europe. Sometimes they feel I have done them an injustice."

The young man's request and Gandhiji's reply were summarised in Telugu for the benefit of those who did not understand English.

"Magnificent Example"

When Gandhiji was shown the almshouse in the Gokhale Hall, he took out a bottle and saw what medicine it contained. In some bureaux there were books. "This library was presented by Mr. Nageshwara Rao," informed the Secretary.

"Very good," responded the Mahatma.

Mr. A. V. Thakkar's remarks, when he visited the place, were read out to him. He had written in the visitor's book that the Hall was a "magnificent example."

Gandhiji: "Shall I write here or there?" ('There' meant his camp).

"Anywhere you please."

Mahatmajji took the book to his residence and wrote: "It was a perfect delight to me to be able to visit this very cleanly kept Harijan colony. I wish it all prosperity."

Right Royal Reception In Mysore

MAD RUSH OF CROWD

Mysore gave a right royal welcome to Gandhiji. The audiences were in all places large and enthusiastic and the response to his appeal for funds good.

At the Bangalore Cantonment meeting a tragedy seemed to be imminent. The people who were sitting on the ground suddenly created noise and confusion. It was a quarter to six in the evening when Gandhiji was expected to arrive. As they thought that he was coming, they moved to take positions of vantage near the platform. The result was unpleasant: there was confusion and uproar. The children, who were sitting in the enclosure, were nearly crushed and they cried. The outer enclosure was harricaded by a bamboo fence, but it gave way as the crowd rushed. With difficulty the children were helped out of the stampede. Gandhiji was late by ten minutes.

After this meeting Gandhiji went to Knoxpet. On the way the engine of his car got too heated to go farther. So, he had to change the car. As his new car, which was a Sedan, came near the Municipal Model House, the crowd surrounded it to see him. But as the switch was not on, the *darshan*-seekers were disappointed.

They were resolved to see him there and then, and no persuasion to make them clear the path had any effect. Fortunately, at this time the car that came in the rear poured a flood of light on him. The crowd was immensely pleased on seeing him.

In spite of requests, the ladies' meeting at Mysore continued to be noisy. Gandhiji began his speech thus : "I know you have not come to hear me. So I will not make a long speech. You know for what you have given the purse."

As soon as he had finished, a girl gave him a gold ring and got his autograph in Tamil. Another girl of 12 years gave Rs. 5 for his autograph. The former came back to him and requested him for his autograph in Hindi also. He obliged her.

An elderly Iyengar came with a child. She instructed it in Tamil: *grāṇḍa māmāyā arāṇḍāyāṅḍā arāṇḍā. arāṇḍāyāṅḍā Gāṇḍī* (Show both your hands to grand-papa. Do *nawaskar* to him). He got two bangles.

The Ear-rings

At Somanahalli after the auction sale was over, Gandhiji was about to leave the platform, when a boy dashed to it. "I want your autograph, please," he requested.

"What will you give?" asked Gandhiji. "I want rupees."

"One rupee," offered the enthusiast.

"What are these?" the Mahatma touched his ear-rings.

"You can take them."

"Have you your father's permission?"

"Yes. He will not object to my giving them to you."



आदि for Thannappi's ear-rings



Taken of Thammappa's ear-rings

"You have so much independence!"

The boy showed his ears. As Gandhiji took the ear-rings, he advised the boy: "You don't want them. Do not put on earrings hereafter. Do not ask your parents for new ones."

Gandhiji gave him the autograph and enquired: "What's your name?"

"B. V. Thammappa."

"How old are you?"

"Thirteen."

"So you have independence at thirteen. I had not".

Arjunan's Struggle

At the Khengeri Gurukula Ashram, a low platform¹ was erected under the acacia trees. The *Ashramites* sat in front of it. As Gandhiji took his seat, a student named Arjunan held out his autograph note-book to him and requested: "Please, an autograph."

"Rs. 5," demanded Gandhiji.

"We are all poor, sir," the student pleaded.

"If you are poor, why do you want the autograph, which is intended for rich people."

"We have given our lives for it," said Arjunan, meaning by *it* the Harijan cause.

"No, don't give your life for a simple autograph," advised the Mahatma. "Life is intended for a higher and nobler cause."

Arjunan had been declared some days ago as the best reciter of the *Gita*, when a competition was held in the *Ashram*. Gandhiji presented him now a silver medal. After the visitor had left for the Khengeri

village, the boy ran to that place. Gandhiji had almost finished the auction sale at the meeting there, when the student elbowed his way through the crowd to the platform and gave the medal to him.

"Is it worth Rs. 5?" asked the recipient.

"Take it free," said the boy.

Gandhiji auctioned it and it brought Rs. 4.

Arjunan again asked: "There is now Rs. 4; please give me your autograph."

"One rupee more," demanded the seller.

The boy again pleaded poverty, but in vain.

The next day Arjunan tried again to meet Gandhiji at the meeting of the Bangalore Temperance Federation and at the public meeting. He came to Gandhiji's residence that night but did not get a chance of meeting him alone. On the following day, the Mahatma's day of silence, the story of Arjunan's quest for autograph was brought to the notice of Mr. Shankerlal Banker, who immediately went to the Mahatma and got his autograph in Hindi for him.

Arjunan is a Harijan.

At the Deena Seva Sangh, Bangalore, Gandhiji laid the foundation-stone of a school building amidst chanting of Vedic mantras. After his speech was over, he put the welcome address to auction and a gentleman bid Rs. 100. "You are the proud possessor," Gandhiji congratulated him.

At the Malleswaram meeting he took a garland of artificial jasmine and, turning to the girls who sang songs, said: "You also bid. Say you give the bangles (Laughter). If you will give away the bangles and not ask your parents again for them, certainly they will permit you to give them away."

Then he took out a fountain pen and read the trade mark. He invited bidders. A boy who was standing far from the audience, shouted out, "One anna."

A volunteer immediately offered, "One rupee."

Gandhiji, in an ironical tone and shaking his head, remarked: "Oh, you get a fountain pen for one rupee!"

The same man raised the bid to Rs. 2, but higher it went.

At Gopalapuram he laid the foundation-stone of a school building for Harijans. When he sat on the platform, Harijans sang *Raghupati Raghava Rajaram* to the accompaniment of a violin, harmonium and *wridazgas*. But within a minute someone told them to stop the music. "Let them do it," Gandhiji allowed them to continue. When it stopped, he remarked: "Good! Is it finished?"

Men Ran Over

Before going to the Municipal Office, Bangalore, he drove through a number of streets. A large crowd had gathered to see him. By the time he came to the Municipal Office he was a bit too early and so he drove away to the Public Office Garden, where he spent eight minutes and returned to the function at the exact time.

When his car came out of the Municipal Office compound, the spectators who were standing on the footpath suddenly closed in upon it. They struggled to touch him. The Police and the volunteers had a trying time now. The crowd refused to be kept away. The car could not move. Just then a Police Officer wormed his way to the second car and informed, pointing to the first: "That car drove over two men. Their legs were crushed. They are removed. Move on carefully."

A little force had to be used, in the end, to clear the path of the crowd.

In His Element at Auction

At the Bangalore public meeting there was an audience of 15,000 including a large number of ladies. The guest was presented with a clay model of himself spinning at the *charkas* under the national flag. He began his speech with an expression of thanks for the purse and added: "I was almost going to say a good purse, but I know you could have made it a larger one" (Laughter).

Gandhiji held the microphone in his hand all the time he spoke. He was in his element at auction time. This was his prologue: "There are Gujarati, Multani and Sindhi merchants here. There are the Karnatakas too. But it does not matter. After all we are the sons of the same soil. Let there be a competition to outbid one another and not to outwit Harijans."

He took the citizens' casket and said: "Its price is Rs. 250."

Somebody told him its actual price.

"Its price is Rs. 75," he corrected himself and added, "and the Committee expects it to bring Rs. 275."

Again he mentioned the groups of bidders: "There are the Marwaris and the Gujaratis," and started "*chalicé*!"

"Rs. 300," offered Mr. Srinivasachari.

"Don't be afraid of Rs. 300," encouraged the great Bania. "I have got Rs. 1,000 for a casket."

There was no response to his hint.

"Rs. 300, once," he began straight away.

"Rs. 300, twice," he added and he seemed to make haste.

"I expect more for this. Come along." He waited hopefully.

"Rs. 300, twice."

"Rs. 350," came from the second bidder and shouts of "Mahmaji Rao" arose instantly.

"Rs. 350, once," Gandhiji proceeded and still expressed optimism. "Who will say Rs. 400?"

A voice: "Rs. 375."

"I thought you would say Rs. 400," said the Mahatma.

"Rs. 400," offered the same person, Mr. Belur Srinivasa Iyengar.

A big pencil sketch of Gandhiji, doing some writing, was shown to the people. He announced: "I am told ladies are anxious to bid by giving their jewels. I am prepared to accept their bids, provided they have the permission of their parents or husbands as the case may be. I don't want to create a quarrel in their homes."

A journalist got it for Rs. 35.

"Truth at Any Cost"

Before going to the public meeting, Gandhiji addressed the ladies. When he was about to leave them, a girl, 18 years old, came to him with a request for his autograph.

As he took the pen to write, she made another request: "Please give me a motto also." He laughed pleasantly, wrote "Truth at any cost," and signed. She was very pleased with it and did *namaskar*. As she touched his foot with her head, he blessed her and patted her on the back.

The Attitude in Kerala

STIRRING SPEECHES

Kerala had the good fortune of listening to the most stirring of Gandhiji's speeches. That was no wonder. Untouchability is found in its worst form there. There is un-seeability too! Harijans, who are also highly educated in Kerala, very much resent the treatment meted out to them. For some years past there has been propaganda in the press and on the platform to convert them to other faiths. But, staunch Hindus that they are, they have not been misled. On the other hand, the younger generation seems to grow atheistic. Harijan young men's associations, as was natural, put many questions to the High Priest of Anti-untouchability. As the time and place demanded, he pitched his speech in the highest key.

Scenes in a Theatre

The Palghat ladies' meeting was held at a cinema theatre. It had the finest comedy ever shown when Gandhiji touched the chin of an old lady, who came to worship him.

When he had finished his speech, the ladies came on the platform one after another to present him their ornaments. To begin with, an old lady presented him a

purse and garlanded him. Next came a Tamil lady with a clay model of Gandhi, when the Mahatma accosted her: "Do you want to bring toys?" She gave him a gold ring also. A Malayalee girl presented him with an address. While receiving it, he told her: "I want bangles."

"Take this," she responded with a merry but bashful look and put a ring into his hand.

"Where are the Hindi-knowing girls?" he enquired. Immediately a girl presented him with the Hindi address.

"Do you know Hindi?" he asked her in English.

"No."

"Then you are not presenting this on your behalf."

A Malayalee lady came to offer a present.

"Do you know Hindi?" he put the question straight away.

"Yes," she replied.

"This has to be explained to all," he told her, handing the address to her.

As his eyes fell on the Tamil address, he asked: "Where is the Tamil girl who gave this?" He looked into the address and exclaimed: "Oh, it is written *Vandamataram*!"

"You must sell it," he set her a task, as she came near him.

Someone standing by told him that she was ready to buy it herself. "But she would pay afterwards," added the informant.

"At any time she likes," agreed the seller, giving the ready buyer great credit.

A little girl of five years gave him a jewel. He caught hold of her hand and pulled her to him. She

came near and turned towards the audience. Standing as she did, she tried to jump backwards on to the platform.

"Ah! ah! ah!" laughed Gandbiji and helped her to a seat on his right side, saying, "You want to sit."

The readiness with which she took the seat and sat with an "I-like-this" look pleased all. As she sat by his side with a suppressed smile, he gave her an orange. She hesitated a bit to receive it. "Take it," encouraged a voice.

She got up with the Mahatma's pat on her back and walked into the crowd proudly with the orange in her hand.

He distributed oranges to children, whose faces beamed with joy, as he lovingly stroked their tiny cheeks. He behaved just like a child.

He held up for sale the clay model of his self and asked: "Who will pay for this?"

The child of a lady who presented him with a gold ornament cast an eager look at it. At once he gave the toy to it.

Touch of Humour

At the Ottapalam meeting he began his reply to the address with a touch of humour. He said:—

"The address has been presented to me by a lady. If it means that women don't present the address on behalf of men, the men do not present an address to me. Women of Malabar have not summoned sufficient strength to present an address on behalf of men and women. They say 'We the women of this

taluk' instead of 'We the men and women.' This domestic dispute is not to be settled by me (Laughter). You will settle it yourself" (Renewed laughter).

He started the sale thus: "I expect the first bid from women. You can offer any amount. Come along, come along." After a few seconds he warned: "If you don't come, the men will take this address away." There was still delay.

"Men can bid," came the permission.

"Rs. 2," offered a man at once.

But in the end a woman was the highest bidder.

"Jaya Sitaram"

The crowd in Ashikkal Station rushed towards his compartment crying, "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-Jai."

"*De do* (Give)," he said stretching out his hand for money. "*Paise* (money), that is the point." He began to collect little donations.

"Jaya Sitaram Ramachandra!" cried a man from the off-side of the train.

"*Ramachandraji! paisa de do*," responded Gandhiji merrily.

"When I return in the afternoon," he gave them a parting message, "have some coins ready."

"Yes, yes," shouted the crowd in reply.

Advice to Harijan Children

At the Payyanur Vidyalyaya for Harijans, Gandhiji asked the children: "Have you to recite anything?"

They sang: *He matre bhumi tare shakame shir nama hu*. As they finished singing, he asked, "Where is Swamiiji?" He sat down on the cushion that was

placed in a corner. A boy of 12 years read an address in Hindi.

"*Archa! Jao* (Very well, bring it)," he said to the boy, as he finished reading the address. "Is there anything more?"

Two boys of ten years old recited the *Gayatri*. A child of seven years recited a few verses from the *Vedas*. Another student of 12 years recited verses from the *Bhagavad Gita*.

"What about the girls?" asked Gandhiji of the Swami, who had come there during the recitation. "I have not heard their voices even."

The girls also sang a song.

The visitor enquired as to how the Swami built the house and how he conducted the school. In fine, he asked: "Have I to say something to the boys?"

"Yes, a few words," requested the master.

"Do they know Hindi?"

"Not much."

"Well boys," began Gandhiji in English like a true pedagogue. "What shall I tell you? Keep good your body, mind and soul."

The out-caste

When Gandhiji was in his residence, a young man put a few rupees into his hand and said piteously, "This is a small sum." And he did *namaskar*.

A by-stander informed Gandhiji that the youth's uncle was the leader of the black flag procession in that place.

"So you are doing reparation," laughed the Reform Priest, turning to the donor.

"I am an out-caste," the young man told his tale. "I went to jail in 1931 and my community outcasted me. I belong to a Namhoothri family."

Stringent Cannanore

There was an audience of about 15,000 at the Cannanore public meeting. But at the auction time the people did not rise equal to the occasion. Moreover, as Gandhiji himself put it: "Your purse, in view of the name of the place, is none too large."

He concluded his speech: "I ask you to kindly help me to dispose of the many addresses, which have been showered upon me. And I hope that all those who have subscribed to the purse or not at all will rise equal to the occasion and bid liberally."

As the public address was held up for sale, there was hesitation on the part of buyers.

"Don't expect me to carry all these with me," he said. "Before I reach Tellicherry these will break to pieces."

"Rs. 5," came a voice.

"*Ancha rupya en vattam* (Rs. 5, once)," cried Mahatmaji and it was greeted with a tremendous applause.

"*Panche rupya ek bar*," he himself translated it into Hindi.

The audience enjoyed his humour and heard him shout at the top of his voice, but remained tight-fisted. The bids were very poor throughout.

In French Territory

The public meeting in French Mahe was convened on the grounds of the Pattalam Temple, which was thrown open to Harijans during the September Fast. About 3,000 people attended it. The French Police and

the volunteers worked in harmony in controlling the crowd.

After small donations had been collected, Gandhiji said: "I have a complaint against the ladies. I consider it a serious one. I understand no jewel is included in the collection. I don't think they are so out of touch with ladies of other parts of India, especially Tellicherry, as not to understand that ladies there have given me jewels. I got from them bangles, rings and necklaces. Let it not be said that the ladies of Mahe refused to give me jewels (Applause). If there are ladies to give ornaments, let them do so."

These words had their effect and there was a good collection of jewels.

Kaumati's Offer

There was a touching scene at Badagara. As the auction of articles was going on, a Nayar girl, with plaited hair measuring four feet, came on the platform. She asked for Gandhiji's autograph and gave him two bangles.

"Have you got the permission of your father?" he asked, as she gave them.

"Yes," she replied. She presented him with her necklaces and ear-rings also.

As she was about to go, he asked, "What is your name?"

"Kaumati," she answered.

Just then a by-stander told the Mahatma that her father was sitting on the platform.

"He must be proud of his daughter," Gandhiji commended, and told the father, who came quite



Kanmai gives her necklace.



Laying the foundation-stone of the Gurukul building.



Mrs. Sasa Brunder shows a painting of Christ.



After showing the painting, she says: "I can draw a picture of you, when you are at the spinning-wheel or at prayer."
 "Not when I am angry with you," he put in quickly.

near, "You will tell her not to wear jewels hereafter."

"Yes," he consented.

Gandhiji then turned to the audience and said that Kaumati was not in need of their pity or support. She was an example to be imitated and not to be pitied.

Telugu Heroine

In appealing to the audience at the ladies' meeting at Calicut that very evening, he referred to this incident. He also narrated an incident in the life of the Telugu heroine, Annapurna Devi: "There was a girl in Andhradesh, who was married. I made an appeal in a theatre. She was the first to give her jewels. Andhradesh ladies are much too heavily bedecked with jewels. Their ornaments are costly. Though Annapurna Devi's were comparatively simple, her necklace was long, heavy and of pure gold. I must not describe other articles of her jewellery. But, alas! she is no more. I must inform you that she did not replace her jewels. She had rich parents, who would have replaced her jewellery. But from that time—it is nearly three years since she died—she never more wore jewels. Annapurna Devi and Kaumati gained by giving away their ornaments. I linger by these illustrations."

As he was concluding, an elderly Malayalee lady asked her friend to unhook her gold necklace, and she presented it to Gandhiji. Before the speech was over, a lady in multi-coloured saris gave a bangle to him. No sooner had he finished than the audience rose to its feet like one woman and went in groups of twos and threes to him to offer donations in gold and silver. Those that did not contribute to the Harijan fund there could be counted on the fingers' ends.

Those That Give Gain

The largest meeting in Malabar was the one held on the Callout beach. About 20,000 people were present. Gandhiji held up the bidders and other enthusiasts for an hour and a half. Reviewing his visit to Kalpetta earlier in the day, he quoted Bishop Heber:

"Every prospect pleases,

Man alone is vile."

First of all an oil painting of Mahatmaji, the work of a Malayalee artist, was shown to the audience. The auctioneer commenced with a tip: "Start with a good, respectable bid, but not with a Bania bid. Start with a Parsi bid. Come along now."

There was silence.

He, therefore, explained: "It does not mean that only a Parsi should commence, but those who have the heart of a Parsi."

"Rs. 100," came the first bid.

"*Neeru rupiya, ara vattam* (Rs. 100, once)," the translator cried out hastily.

"No *ara vattam* yet," Gandhiji told him not to make haste. There was laughter.

"Rs. 125," offered another.

"Increase the bid at least by ten," suggested the seller. The bid trotted: "Rs. 161," "Rs. 211," and "Rs. 251." There it was drowned in a loud hand-clapping.

A little later Gandhiji tickled the audience saying, "*300 rupiya, ara vattam* (Rs. 300, once)."

"Remember those that give for this cause gain," he repeated the burden of his message, "and those that do



On the way to the Sitanagaram Ashram,



Returning from the platform after addressing a meeting in
an Andhra village



The Unwanted Picture.

not give lose." The crowd, rapturously applauded the appeal. When it stopped, he asserted, "It is experience."

"*Chalo, chalo* (Up, up)," he repeated to make the bidders cross the barrier.

The bid leaped to Rs. 400. It stepped, hopped and jumped: "Rs. 500," "Rs. 510," "Rs. 600."

The prize-winner was at once located. Shouts arose: "Nagji, Nagji."

The Unwanted Picture

At Ernakulam, Mahatmajī was presented with a picture in which His Majesty the King Emperor was in the centre. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Gandhiji were on the King's left side and Her Majesty the Queen and Mrs. Sarojini Nayudu on the King's right. On the top of the picture was written in ink: "Religion and caste are the most dreadful enemy of Harijans."

Commenting on the picture, he said: "Even for the Harijan cause I can't be instrumental in selling this article. It is not religion that is the enemy of Harijane, but irreligion. Untouchability, as it is prevalent to-day, is not religion, but a device of the devil. Let the friend who presented this, destroy this. I implore him to take this back. If he wants, let him remove what is written here and send this back to me."

Artist Criticized

Gandhiji was presented with a coconut shell on which were carved pictures of some of the national leaders. Looking at the pictures, he asked: "Is this Sarojini Devi?"

"Yes," replied the artist.

"She did not look like this at any time," commented Gandhiji.

Revolving the shell in his hand, he again asked: "Is this Lokamanya Tilak?"

"Yes."

"What a libel," he exclaimed. "I must instruct some advocate to take proceedings against you" (Laughter). Turning to a gentleman, who was sitting by his side, Gandhiji asked: "Are you a good lawyer?"

The gentleman was mute.

"You are an indifferent lawyer then" (Laughter).

The bid for the casket stood at Rs. 45. He cried: "Rs. 45, twice." There was the report of a gun. "The report says *maam vaki* (thrice)," concluded he. This created the loudest laughter.

A lady came to get his autograph.

"That means Rs. 5," he told her.

She put her finger to the nose to mark her surprise. "You are well enough to pay," he observed. She agreed.

Enthusiastic to a Fault

Travancore gave a magnificent reception to Gandhiji. When he landed at Arcoor, myriads of people, dressed in simple white, raised lusty shouts of "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-Jai." There was also a salute of guns. A huge tusker in trappings, on whom was placed a picture of the great visitor, trumpeted welcome, while camphor and incense were burnt in offering.

Gandhiji's message had penetrated the remotest corners of the State. The meetings in villages attracted

thousands of admirers from hamlets that lurk among the trees and dot the shores of huge backwaters. The people were enthusiastic to a fault in making the reception hearty and the reception committees in a few places were gently rebuked for the way in which they spent money.

The Boat-race

In Kuttanad, the enthusiasm and demonstration of love reached a climax. While Gandhiji was going in a steam launch from Alleppy to Kottayam, the village people followed him in small, swift country boats up to Nedumudi, where a meeting was held at night. At Manattumukham, a country boat, which was called snake-boat because of its shape, came racing alongside of the steam launch. It was 95 feet long and there were 50 rowers. A few men stood on it singing *Venchappattu* (boat-song) and the oars played to its accompaniment. The louder they sang, the faster the boat travelled. It was a two-mile race, which Gandhiji himself enjoyed. At one time the snake-boat just touched the side of the launch, when its crew had the opportunity of seeing him closely and receiving his blessings.

It may be mentioned that the crew and boat were the recipients of the first prize when a boat-race was held at the time of His Excellency the Viceroy's visit. Then four boats were hired at Rs. 400 each for the race. But on this occasion love and veneration were at the bottom of the demonstration.

Faith in Mission

Gandhiji's residence at Alleppy was besieged by a crowd of 3,000 people, who waited patiently outside to

catch a glimpse of him. But the crowd was growing so vast and the prospect of driving through it was so alarming that Gandhiji had to give it the slip. He went out through the backdoor, where a car—not the one in which he came there—was kept in readiness to go to the meeting place.

In his speech, he replied to the letters which he had received from certain young men, who had suggested to him not to carry on the campaign in the name of Hinduism, expressing their disbelief in religions and denying the existence of God. He said:—

"If untouchability can be removed, these young men will change their opinion. I will not say religion is useless and God is a devil. I may lose faith in Hinduism, but my faith in religion and God will remain unshaken. I am praying to God that, even if Hinduism and Hindus disappoint, I may still cling to God like a child (Applause). It is my conviction that all religions are true and God-ordained, and that they serve God's purpose and those who have been brought up under those faiths and in those surroundings. Believe me, if untouchability can be removed, the peoples of the world can be brought together. This is but a small movement. I have implicit faith that my mission will succeed and, if so, history will record it as a unifying force not only in India but in the whole world."

Malayalam Expressions

Taking up an article for auction, Gandhiji asked:

"Shall I begin in Hindi?"

"Yea," cried numerous voices.

As he held up a sandalwood casket to the audience, there was no bid immediately. So he reminded *Sigraaya*

Subham (Beginning a work straightway is itself an auspicious sign).

"Rs. 10," came an offer at once.

While the bid was at Rs. 14, the translator shouted, "*14 rupia, ora taraw.*"

"What!" exclaimed Gandhiji, "in Malabar it was *vattam*, in Cochin *vattu* and in Travancore it is *taraw*."

Some one raised the bid to Rs. 19. Gandhiji tried to get at the Malayalam expression and repeated "*petta, vattam*," twice and struggled at combining them. But another voice relieved him. Moving his hand as a mark of giving up the struggle, he encouraged: "Chaleh, Rs. 20."

When he took up the Hindi address for auction, he was informed that the lady who was standing below the platform to receive it had given a bangle for it.

But he said: "She can take back the bangle, if she wants. But this cannot be given."

"I do not want the bangle back," she replied.

So he held up the address for auction.

"Here is another bangle for it," she offered again removing the ornament.

He gave the article to her and told her: "If you want that bangle, you can take that back."

No, she did not like the idea.

Night Meeting on an Island

At Fedumudi, a small island village, a large crowd of people sent up shouts of "Jai," as they saw the steam launch and the snake-boat come racing together. The meeting was held at about 9 o'clock at night in a

cocoanut garden. The Untouchables living in the neighbouring islets had gathered in large numbers to hear the Mahatma.

Referring to that part of the address wherein the oppression of Harijans by caste Hindus was stressed, Gandhiji said that there were not many Hindus of that type. The rich and orthodox section will not long be an obstacle to the movement.

When he put the address presented by the Kuttanad Taluk people to auction, a very poor man, a Christian "Untouchable," got it for Rs. 2. When he appealed for jewels and money, some people gave him clothes, old and new. Even women gave away their upper cloth.

The Misconception

The Kottayam address mentioned, among other things, that Harijans were coming to their own and that untouchability was fast disappearing. Referring to it, he said in no unmistakable terms: "The address conveys the idea that Harijans are perfectly happy and have no complaint against the Savaranas. But I warn the Savaranas not to entertain such a belief. Things are not so rosy. I ask all the Savaranas to answer for themselves whether they have abolished all distinctions of high and low. I have received several complaints from the Ezhavas and Thiyaas of Travancore. There are some among them who want to abolish religion and to say that there is no God. I cannot blame them for this misconception. It is we who are responsible for that sin. This is a most dangerous sign for the Savaranas and they must not think that all is well. It is also wholly wrong to entertain the belief that, if the economic

condition of Harijans is bettered, the problem will be solved."

While Gandhiji was sectioning an article, a lad brought a small bottle to him. Immediately Gandhiji asked: "You are bringing some scent?" and nodded his head by way of interrogation.

"No," the lad replied, "here is an elephant made of ivory."

He uncorked the bottle and showed the tiny work.

"Can I ride on it?" asked Gandhiji.

At Karonakapalle, Gandhiji expressed his pleasant surprise at lawyers' serving as volunteers: He said: "In all places it must be like this, but in many places it is not."

At Shivagiri, one saw how enthusiastically the Harijans of Travancore welcomed the Mahatma. The meeting was held at the Sarada Mutt, which was established by the late Sri Narayana Guru. Thousands of people lined the roads that led to it. The bolder of the enthusiasts found positions of vantage on the slopes of hillocks and on branches of trees. About 5,000 people sat on the galleries and the floor of the Mutt premises. Over 500 ladies were near the platform. This was the most enthusiastic assemblage in Travancore.

Trivandrum Meeting

The vast maidan behind the Public Offices in Trivandrum was one seething mass of humanity. From the Law College to the south-east corner of the maidan, where the meeting was held, both sides of the road were packed with men. The meeting was held in an enclosure, to which admission was restricted by tickets.

There was an audience of 5,000, including a thousand ladies.

As soon as Gandhiji sat on the platform, he said, "Remove the fence."

"There will be a stampede," replied a gentleman, who was standing near.

"There won't be," said Gandhiji.

Immediately the Police were instructed to form a cordon round the ladies' section. There was suddenly noise at the end near the entrance. For, close by the gate there was a tree, on the branches of which were some young men, who jumped into the enclosure and rushed into the crowd. At this time the posse of Police guarding the entrance ran after them, and at once a large number of those who were shut out rushed in through the gate. A section of the audience cheered those who gained entrance by such unlawful means.

"All should be perfectly silent," ordered Gandhiji. A few minutes later again the same kind of incident was repeated, and again he said: "All of you, please, be silent till the end."

After a long speech, he began the auction sale. "I will sell the things to you if you will be silent as you have been during the speech," he said and clicked a few articles.

As he told the audience, "Please give to the volunteers what you have to give," a Harijan came up the steps, and a member of the reception committee, who was on the platform, stopped him.

"Let him come," intervened the Mahatma. The Harijan brother gave the Mahatma silver rings and expressed his regret that he was not able to give more, as he was poor.

"This is supposed to be picture of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru," he began the sale. "Who will pay for it?"

"Rupee one," came the bid.

"You are a Bania," quickly remarked the auctioneer, turning to the place from where the voice came. "I thought Banias were only in Gujarat. If they are here also, I can't help it."

"This is supposed to be a likeness of some one, but not myself," said he, as he introduced another article. There was a tumultuous burst of laughter. It was a picture of Gandhiji himself but a bad one.

"Rupee one, thrice," he concluded auctioning a clay model of himself.

"Rs. 2," shouted another bidder.

"I can't accept it even for the Harijan cause."

He took a silver snuff-box and asked, "Who will pay Rs. 5 for this? I know I can get more elsewhere, probably in Tinnevely."

Auditing Accounts

When Gandhiji went to the Harijan Hostel in Trivandrum, he enquired of the gentleman-in-charge details as to how it was run. He was told the meals cost Rs. 9.

"Show me your meals," Gandhiji demanded. "It can't cost Rs. 9."

After looking into the accounts for a few minutes, he asked: "Whose writing is this?"

"It is the clerk's."

"How much does he get?"

The clerk was a part time worker.

"Are vouchers kept here?" continued Gandhiji. When it was found that there were no vouchers, Mr. Thakkar advised the clerk to keep them in the future.

"This is extraordinary," remarked Gandhiji after scrutinising the accounts. "The cost of food does not come to Rs. 4. There are other expenses also."

"Does Rs. 9 include all expenses such as rent?" he wanted to clear his doubt.

"Yes, all expenses, but not rent."

"Then Rs. 9 is too much."

Going into the details of food-stuffs, he asked:

"Do you have curd?"

"Only buttermilk."

"It does not cost much," he again remarked and read the expenditure on milk, which was quite small.

"Bring Him to Dinner"

After further cross examination, he turned aside to the boys and asked: "Who are the college students?"

They stood up.

"You are all happy here?" he asked them.

In reply to further questions, they informed him that they swept the floor, cleaned the vessels and other things. The latrine was cleaned by the Municipal scavenger.

"There should be perfect touch between him and ourselves," Gandhiji broke in. "He is not to be despised in this institution here. Confidence must be reposed in him." With an anxious expression on his face, he quickly came to the point, "Do you treat him as an inferior?"

"No, sir," the students replied.

He advised them not to give gratuity to the scavenger, but to invite him to dinner now and then.

"He won't come, sir," they said.

"You must invite him and bring him to dinner," he said again. "I expect you to do it."

A Request

As he was about to start, a gentleman was introduced to him as the leader of the Pulia community.

"How old are you?" Gandhiji asked straightway. "65."

"You and I are equal," he observed. "I am also 65."

The gentleman expressed the desire to have at least one Harijan graduate in each Taluk.

"Why one, I give ten," came the ready assurance.

"We know nothing of religion," the gentleman complained and requested Gandhiji to help in the matter.

At the ladies meeting held at Jagathi, Trivandrum, there were about 300 ladies and the number of men who had come to see the visitor was a little larger.

A lady sitting near the platform held out a picture of Gandhiji and Vallabhai to the Mahatma and requested: "Your autograph, please."

"You don't know that, it costs five rupees," he said. He put his signature on it and she gave him the price.

Coming back to his residence, he had a different task to do. Even before getting down from the car, he dressed the wound in the right hand of Mr. Changannasery K. Parameswaran Pillai, the retired Judge of the Travancore High Court and President of the State

Harijan Sevak Sangh. He dressed it well. When the door of the car was hanged, a portion of Mr. Pillai's palm was caught between the door and the side of the car.

Nagercoil Citizens' Address

The Nagercoil meeting was the largest one after Gandhiji left Vijayanagaram. At a modest estimate the audience must have numbered 20,000, of which one sixth was ladies. This was a Tamil audience. About 15,000 people were sitting down, while the rest stood all round the fringe.

When Gandhiji's car came into the crowd, there was a rush towards it and it was not able to move. It took fifteen minutes to cover fifty feet. When it was at a distance of three yards from the platform, it came to a dead stop. Here the crowd was the densest and the pressure towards him the greatest. In the end, he had to get down and push his way through the crowd to reach the platform.

In spite of the Government order not to present an address to Mahatma Gandhi the Chairman and the Councillors of the Nagercoil Municipality presented him with one on behalf of the citizens.

At Cape Camorin, Gandhiji and party were put up in the Arunachala Pandaram Chatram. On the day of silence he bathed in the holy sea. In the evening he went for a walk on the shore. A crowd of villagers followed him from place to place.

Priest's fees

At the Sri Ramakrishna Gurukul in Parangattukara, near Trichur, Gandhiji laid the foundation-stones of a shrine and the Gurukul building. When he had laid

the foundation-stone of the building, a gentleman told Gandhiji: "You now get *dakshina* (priest's fees)." Another man put the coins into his hand.

"Why did I not get *dakshina* for laying the foundation-stone of the shrine?" asked Gandhiji.

"That is also brought here," replied the gentleman, "and so you get two coins now."

"I see."

Pullazhi Colony

Gandhiji spent a few minutes in visiting the Harijan Colony at Pullazhi conducted by the Cochin State Government. The Official Protector of the Depressed Classes gave the Mahatma an account of the uplift work which the State had been doing during the last eight years. The officer complained to him that the Harijans did not jump at the offer.

"They do not like to occupy better houses," said Gandhiji with an ironical laugh.

The Colony was beautiful and there were neat, little cottages.

Fortunate Tamil Nadu

FOREIGN VISITORS

The Tamil Nadu tour had a special feature. Tamil Nadu, like Andhradesh, got only five hours of Gandhiji's worktime. This was due to heavy rains, which interfered with his programme in the beginning. But in spite of rains, people gathered in thousands and tens of thousands to see Gandhiji and he himself was no less enthusiastic in carrying out the programme, even when there was a downpour. But Tamil Nadu was fortunate to get more days later than the days that were allotted to it in the beginning. Towns and villages vied with one another in giving him the grandest reception. The collections, too, were good, although they were not commensurate with the number of days he spent there and the number of places he visited. In the latter part of the tour some places did not give as much money as they promised him. For example, Pondichery promised him a fat purse, but actually gave him Rs. 101.

In almost every town meeting there was a sprinkling of Europeans, both men and women. There were some foreign visitors also. Mr. H. E. Trumbo of San Diego, California, came to see Gandhiji at Trichinopoly. He told me that his mother had told him so

much about the Mahatma that he developed a keen desire to see him. At Coimbatore, two Danish gentlemen not only came to see him, but also gave him small contributions to the Harijan fund and to the Bihar people's relief. But they wished to remain anonymous. At the Karur meeting a handful of Christian missionaries took their seats on the platform to see him at close quarters. At Erode, while Gandhiji was addressing the gathering, the most attentive listeners were eight Europeans, men and women, who were sitting just below the platform. Gandhiji of his own accord included in the itinerary the Christu Kula Ashram at Tiruppatoor. The fringe of the large gathering at Pondichery was adorned with French ladies, who were gaily dressed and held parasols in their hands to ward off the sun.

Weakness Exposed

The tour exposed the weak point of the province. At the monster meeting on the Triplicane beach, where there was a record gathering of 100,000 people, Gandhiji was not able to speak, because of the confusion and uproar that prevailed. This meeting ended in a failure, as there was no trained volunteer corps. That is a sad commentary on the arrangements which the organisers in the metropolis had made. There was a dearth of organised volunteers everywhere. Conscious of this drawback, the organisers in all other places requisitioned the help of the Police to control and regulate the crowd. But then it seemed as if the enthusiasm the Police showed in the beginning of the tour in rendering assistance waned later. Owing to an unhappy incident at Shyali, the officer-in-charge

with drew his men from the meeting. Taking all these things into consideration, it has to be said that Tamil Nadu was a striking contrast to Berar, where the volunteer organisation was the best and no Police was necessary to control a Gandhian meeting. In the Central Provinces there were more meetings that were left unattended than the ones that were attended by the C L D. reporters. But in Madras Presidency they took the greatest pains to attend all the meetings without any exception. That must have cost much.

Camouflage of Boycott

It was in the south that opposition was expected in various forms. It would have been no surprise if the Sanatanists, who are blindly led by traditions, and a section of the young men who have been taught to pooch-pooch all kinds of worship and religion, had demonstrated their hostility in a number of ways. On the contrary, there was practically an absence of hostile demonstrations. There was, however, a camouflage of boycott. At Kumbakonam, near the Town High School and near the entrance to the school playgrounds there were a few boys holding black flags. They stood politely at a distance and only one of them, a lad of about twenty years old, shouted five times "Gandhi Go Back." At Shyali, on the boycott arches were written communist slogans denouncing religion. Fifty boys held black flags and stood at a long distance from the crowd that had gathered to accord welcome to the Mahatma. At Veniambadi, the black-flag demonstrators shouted "Go Back Gandhi." They carried in their hands placards, which read: "Don't Believe in God." The vast crowd that welcomed the Reformer also

had placards, which read: "Believe in God: stand by Gandhi." At Trichmopoly, boycott wall-posters were found in plenty. But there were only a few boys who came with black flags to meet Gandhiji in Tbenmur streets. In the morning hours, a car of the Sanatanists that was decorated with posters followed Gandhiji's car but it stopped away in the afternoon. Addressing the public meeting at Srirangam, Gandhiji said: "Today as I came here, I had occasion to congratulate the reception committee and the black-flag demonstrators (Applause). The reception committee I congratulate for their wisdom in saving every pie that was collected. There was nothing but black-flag demonstration. The black-flag demonstrators showed black flags only, but did not create noise. I was agreeably surprised to find the archins who carried the black flag smile at the members of the Reception Committee" (Applause).

Mad Enthusiasm

Everywhere the eagerness of the general public to catch a glimpse of the august personage bordered on madness. At a village near Nanguneri, when the people, who were waiting on the roadside, were told that Mahatmaj's car had gone ahead, a lad could not help expressing his feelings. He exclaimed: "What! Gone ahead!" Quickly he added turning to his disappointed friends: "If I had known that Gandhiji was going in the other car, I would have thrust the blade of my knife into its tyre. Then we could have gazed at him to our heart's content." It was reported that, when Pondichery was dropped from the programme, the donors almost went mad. They lost sight of the object

that was dear to Mahatmajī's heart and insisted on the refund of their moneys. That was why, when he went there, there was actually a small purse, too small for Pondichery to boast of. At Palani, the famous place of pilgrimage, the elephants of the shrine were brought for the demonstration of welcome.

Heaps of addresses were presented to Gandhiji in Tamil Nadu. Many addresses were written in verse. It is only in this part of the country that arches were seen with the inscriptions: "Long live Mahatma Gandhi." At Koradacheri, on the arch that was put near the meeting place was written: "வரச் சார்பார்சுரன் வர!" (Welcome to the Uncrowned King of India).

In British Malabar, Cochin, Travancore and Tamil Nadu, soap manufacturers, potters, silversmiths and perfumers presented their products to him. The readers can easily guess what they meant when they gave these little presents to him instead of cash. At Tanjore and Negapatam this kind of donors were many.

"Truth Is God"

At his Tinnevely residence, a hall, which was about 50 feet by 25 feet, was packed to the full with men and women early in the morning. As Gandhiji came in, many rose up, but he took his seat quickly, saying, "அமர்ச்சு, அமர்ச்சு (Please sit down)." He conversed in a tone of familiarity. Immediately an elderly man put his eight-year-old son before Gandhiji and said: "He gives you ear-rings."

"What is this!" exclaimed Gandhiji with a laugh. "அம்மை (Jewels)," as he received them from the little donor's hand.

In that big hall there was overcrowding and so all were hot and perspiring in the morning hour and Gandhiji had to instruct, "Put on the fan."

As he collected donations, he discussed with the Harijan workers the nature of the purses that he was going to get at the various places that day. At this time a gentleman presented him a number of clothes, which he had brought in a hand-bag.

Another gentleman requested him for his autograph.

"Rs. 5," demanded the giver.

"Every autograph Rs. 5?"

"From Tinnevely I can increase it," coolly replied Gandhiji, smiling.

He at once put a ten-rupee note into Gandhi's hand and held up the autograph-book at the same time. *Truth is God* wrote the Mahatma and signed. He turned over the leaves, where there were many autographs. He was about to sign overleaf, when the enthusiast requested again "here," pointing to a fresh leaf.

"Here! That's right," remarked Gandhiji.

"*pañc pañc Gaṛṣ* (Give Rs. 5)," he demanded again when a girl next came with the same request.

The night previous it had rained heavily. But owing to drizzling in the morning, the roads were muddy. So, when Gandhiji's car went to Pettai, the crowds that lined the wings of the road were found standing away from its middle, but suddenly they closed in as it came, without caring whether mud would be splashed on them or not. Beautiful welcome arches were erected at Pettai with the words: *agāpam Suṭṭamā aṅga! aṅga!* (Welcome to the longed-for Great). Standing in the car he gave *darshan* to the gathering, and received the purse and fruits.

At the public meeting not less than ten thousand persons had gathered. Drops of rain were falling and so somebody held an umbrella for him. The cloth and carpets that were spread on the platform were wet. So he made a speech standing and made a touching appeal for the Bihar people's relief.

At the Tenkasi meeting there were more ladies than men. The things presented to him were many and different: there were addresses, books, photographs of Swami Vivekananda and Gandhiji a beautiful silver plate, a silver model of a parrot, a book-stand etc. Within a few minutes of the commencement of the meeting, it began to rain. The wind was strong and rain drops spattered on the platform. For a time it seemed the meetings would have to be abandoned. But suddenly the sky grew clear and the sun shone brightly.

A Well-organised Meeting

The Tuticorin public meeting was well organised. It was held on the shore and about 30,000 people were present. There was a volunteer corps also, a rare thing in this presidency. The volunteers were regulating the crowd from early afternoon. The meeting was held at 7 o'clock at night, but the night was turned into day. There were 500 to 600 electric bulbs, which brilliantly illuminated the place. The path leading to the platform was broad enough for two motor-cars to drive abreast. After Gandhiji had reached the platform, there was a rush from the eastern end into the path to occupy the vacant space. There was a tremendous noise and a portion of the audience, at the bamboo barricade near the path, was greatly ruffled.

The people rose to their feet but soon sat down and there was quiet again.

As Gandhiji stood on the platform, applause thundered. A garland of jasmine and rose was put on him. Owing to chilly weather he wrapped himself in a cloth. Among the articles presented to him was a beggar's bowl.

The organisers of the meeting did not furnish the speaker and the translator with a microphone each. Perhaps that was due to oversight. On finding this out, Gandhiji said to Dr. Rajan : "Who is to translate? I will speak first. You take down notes and then you will give the substance."

Gandhiji asked on the microphone : "Those of you who hear me, please lift up your hands." At once ten thousand hands went up just in front of him.

For the Municipal address there was a triangular contest. A Hindu, a Muslim and a Christian bid, but, however, the article was knocked down for the small sum of Rs. 8 by the Muslim.

The Christian started the bid for the next article, the Iron Merchants' address. Although it could not be said that there was any competition worthy of the name, he was defeated. The Hindu got the address for Rs. 12.

But the Christian gentleman successfully bid for the address presented to Gandhiji by the Harijan Sevak Sangh.

Madura's Guilt

Madura was guilty of not having kept the *cherries* (Harijan quarters) in the proper manner. It was on a wet day that the Mahatma paid a visit to them and they had then a repelling aspect. Rain water had gathered in

pools here and there and the place was marshy. The huts were built without any plan and there were refuse heaps in many places. Both the west and the south *cheris* were equally bad. In the Tinnevely *cheri*, a large number of Municipal carts were parked to the right of its entrances. In both the towns enthusiastic Harijan crowds awaited the Mahatma.

Replying to the Madura Municipal address, Gandhiji said: "One side [of the *cheri* *keri*] is surrounded by water. In rainy season, at its height, the *cheris* must be unfit for human habitation. They are on a lower level than the road. The cottages are built anyhow. There is no layout of streets or lanes. The cottages, in many places, are not worth the name. In all cases they are so low that we can't enter or come out without bending down. On the whole, sanitation is lower than the minimum."

Mark of Honour

At the Setupaty High School, Madura, when Gandhiji began the auction sale, a student came for his autograph.

"This school girl," he said, giving her his autograph, "gives me a bangle. I invite bangles from girls and rings from boys and girls."

One after another the students came on the platform with their gifts. A student gave him a round silver case.

"This is a toy," the recipient remarked.

There was vermillion (*kanakam*) in it.

Gandhiji immediately began to put *kanakam* mark on the forehead of children, who were sitting on the platform. As he put the mark on some, others went nearer for the honour. He put the mark on all of them, with a smile to each and every one. They were quite pleased to see him smile.

Noisy Meeting

The scene at the Madura ladies' meeting will be green in the memory of spectators for years to come. The lane leading to the theatre, where it was held, was crowded with ladies. When Gandhiji passed them some of them suddenly bent down to touch his feet. Some others stroked their cheeks as a mark of worship and exclaimed "namoGov! (Baghavan!)."

A little girl gave him two bangles for two autographs. He put the paper on the glass frame of an address and signed his name standing. As there was no ventilation and as the crowd was dense, four persons fanned him with old-fashioned fans. In the theatre, which could, perhaps, accommodate 3,000 persons, not less than 5,000 women had gathered. Many of them had brought their children. The noise was so great that nothing could be heard. The shouts of "silence, please" were lost in it.

A large number of jewels were collected at this meeting. It was here that a lady gave a costly necklace as donation for the Harijan fund. It was a triple-chain gold necklace of more than twenty sovereigns. The donor was humble enough not to come to Gandhiji with her present but was content to give it away to his deputy.

At the Hindi Convocation when Gandhiji gave the certificate to a girl student of about 12 years old, he asked her: "Can you read Hindi"? And he opened her prize-book, a dictionary, and pointed out a word. She tried to read it for a minute, but turned to him helpless.

"Ha! ha! ha!", he chuckled.

Exemplary Audience

The labour meeting at Madura was an exemplary one. The behaviour of the audience was such that the

visitor expressed his appreciation of their self-discipline. He also informed them that the speech would be printed and distributed to them. As it was night and as the listeners at the end of the crowd would not have seen him well, Gandhiji said he would go round the ring. He wanted to see them at close quarters. When he went along the barricade, the people put their hands together over the head as a mark of salute. He had his hands near the chest in the worshipful posture. He stopped here and there. Coming near the women's section, he told the interpreter: "Ask the ladies whether they understood the translation." Till he motored away the gathering did not break up. There was not the least noise from the beginning to the end.

The Palmist

Gandhiji's residence at Amaravati Podur was invaded by an enormous number of visitors. As there was no function at that place, they refused to be kept away from the house. One of the enthusiasts was a palmist. He asked permission to approach Gandhiji with a request to read his palm. He was told to pay Rs. 1,000 for that.

"Have I not a right to study his palm?" he asked the usher a little perturbed.

"You can," replied the usher, "provided you give the sum."

"I am a poor man."

"He is a Harijan worker. His time is precious."

"I'm getting mad to see him," said the palmist, controlling his feelings. "I want to study his palm."

"That is what he has said in reply," concluded the usher.

Play the Game

No inducement was necessary to the bidders at the Karaikudi mass meeting. The buyers were more business-like than elsewhere and helped to finish the sale quickly.

As Gandhiji took a *khand* cloth, he made a short speech. He said: "Complaints have been received by me in Madura that spurious *khand* is sold to the public in the name of genuine *khand*. It is a fraud upon Harijans; for thousands of Harijan women are earning their living by spinning. Before the introduction of the *charka* they had no such earning. Now many Harijans in many places are able to buy oil, ghee or milk. If the merchants will not play the game and if the public will buy spurious *khand*, then between the two Harijans will have to suffer. So, I request the merchants not to sell spurious *khand*. I request the public not to buy *khand* that has not been certified by the All-India Spinners' Association."

Naming a Child

The arrangements at the Devakotah public meeting were perfect and Gandhiji received a number of silver articles as presents. He commenced his speech thus: "It is no matter of surprise to me that you have presented an old friend with a purse of Rs 2,000. I had expected much more from Devakotah. I am staying this night here. Before I leave this place I hope you will fill the Harijan purse as you ought to."

A young man put a photograph of a child in Gandhiji's hand and requested him to name it. He

gave the High Priest of Reformation a sovereign to officiate. Gandhiji took the photo and asked: "Who is the father of the girl?"

A gentleman, who was on the platform, answered.

"What if I give the name Savitri," suggested Gandhiji.

"Very well," welcomed the father.

The Mahatma wrote on the photograph "சரீர்ப்ப" (Savitri) and signed.

The mother of the child, who had by this time climbed upon the platform, gave presents of her own to Gandhiji—a silver plate and a sovereign.

Again, Gandhiji proceeded with the auction sale. "This is exceedingly fine yarn," he said feeling its fineness. "He (the gentleman who presented it) has given two-qualities. He is my old friend Murugesan. He presented me last time with a *khadder* cloth, which was auctioned for Rs. 1,000. That piece of *khadder* was very long. This time he has brought a handkerchief, which you can see for yourself. Now bid—bid a fairly good price."

The handkerchief fetched Rs. 25.

When Gandhiji went to Ramnagar, Devakotah, he was given a welcome address on a silver plate, and a purse.

"Not the Taluk Board address?" the recipient asked the hosts.

"Yes," came the reply.

"Not the plate and the purse?" he again asked.

"No," a member replied "by the members of the Taluk Board."

"If you give from the Taluk Board treasury," Gandhiji remarked with a knowing wink, "then you will be punished."

The visitor laid the foundation-stone of the Harijan School.

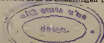
At the Tiruppattur public meeting, as Gandhiji sat on the platform, five Europeans, four ladies and a gentleman, did him *namazkar*. Gandhiji was presented with a beautiful wooden shield, on which an embossed figure in silver of the Mahatma was pinned. While he showed it to the bidders, he said: "I am not going to let this for a trifle. This is beautiful. If you want to take it, you must start with Rs. 20."

The article was, in the end, withdrawn. But what Tiruppattur lost Payaneri won. A little boy, who was on the platform at Payaneri, bought it for Rs. 100.

On the Nilgiris 686

In the salubrious climate of Coonoor Gandhiji's health improved. Although he was expected to take complete rest during his stay there, he was busy. Besides writing to the *Harijan*, he attended to correspondence, both inland and foreign, which had grown in volume. While the Harijan problem absorbed his attention for the present, he was not without anxiety about the relief work in Bihar, about which he had written to many of his friends. Not only that, he began propaganda work.

Deshodharak K. Nageshwara Rao Pantulu's bungalow, "Ramashram," on Mount Pleasant, was besieged by a large number of visitors, mostly Badagas, during Gandhiji's stay there. A handful of European visitors also came, among whom mention must be made of Mr. O. Boari and Miss Schill, both of Kempten in



Switzerland, who brought a letter from one of Gandhiji's friends in Europe, and Mrs. Sess Brunner of Hungary and her daughter, who came to paint a picture of the Mahatma. Some Christian missionaries and others also visited him. In addition to all these, Gandhiji granted interviews to Harijans and Harijan workers. He had also talks on his tour programme.

Counter-propaganda

Some interested persons had held out threats to the people near Kotagiri preventing them from going to see the great visitor. But when the news of Mahatmaji's arrival spread abroad, people were not slow to avail themselves of the opportunity to get his *darshan*. The anti-Gandhi workers went from hamlet to hamlet telling the inhabitants that, if they went to see Gandhiji or hear him, they would be punished. On the other hand, the Congress volunteers made them realize that, if they lost the chance of seeing and hearing him then, they would lose the greatest opportunity of their life. What the effect of this propaganda and counter-propaganda was could be seen from the vast crowds that attended the meetings.

In all the three meetings that Gandhiji addressed on the Nilgiris there was a sprinkling of Anglo-Indians and Europeans. The roadsides were sparsely lined with men and women of the Anglo-Indian community. The enthusiasm of the people on the mountains was scarcely less than the enthusiasm of the people on the plains.

Autograph for European

At the Kotagiri meeting the audience consisted mainly of Badagas. On an elevated ground Gandhiji



Addressing the Kotagiri audience



The Kotagiri audience.



A European gives a tea-rapée note at the Odey meeting



After presenting the currency note, the European shakes hands with him.



Morning walk on Mount Pleasant. On his right is
Mrs. O. Barai and on his left is Miss. Schill,



Mr. and Mrs. Nageshwara Rao,
who played the hosts at Bexwada, Madras and Coonoor.

sat on a chair, while the audience sat down on a grassy maidan below. There was a fairly large number of Anglo-Indians. Lads climbed up the cypress trees to see the speaker better. Near the speaker on a cypress tree was hung from a length of *khadī* yarn a painting of Mahatmaji. On a bench was a heap of oranges. In the mellow light of the evening sun Gandhiji addressed the audience on the evil of drink and on the necessity of removing the idea of high and low from one's mind.

As he finished his speech a European gentleman came rushing towards him from behind requesting, "Please get me his autograph. Quick. It is getting late."

"Don't fear," I told him, "I shall get you."

"Please quick. He will go away," he hastened me again. And saying that he put into my hand the autograph-book, an open fountain pen and a five-rupee note.

I conveyed the request to Gandhiji.

"Oh, autograph!" he remarked, taking the pen.

As he put his name, the gentleman came to the left of Mahatmaji and took the autograph-book. He was present at the Coonoor public meeting next day.

Scavenger by Choice

Gandhiji visited a *cheri* near Mount Pleasant. He sat on a chair in front of the Kali Temple and Harijans sat around him. He advised them not to offer buffalo sacrifice to Kali. "It is irreligious," he said, "to offer animal sacrifice to God."

In Coonoor Town he visited another *cheri*. He stood by the side of a table, as there was not sufficient space for him to sit on the chair kept for him, Harijans eagerly

crowding close to him. Between the chair and the table lay a wire-haired terrier. He sniffed at the speaker's feet often, as though he meant to say, "I am friendly to you." He lay there quietly till the meeting dispersed.

Addressing the gathering, Mahatmaji said: "I am a scavenger by choice. I have cleansed hundreds of commodes in my life. In my *Ashtam* all the *Ashtroontes* must do their own scavenging. I call scavenging one of the honourable occupations."

At Coonoor the audience was smaller than at Kotagiri. A beautiful platform was erected and there were two pairs of steps leading up to it. It cost the Reception Committee Rs. 100, which was a little too much.

As soon as presentation of addresses was over, an old, bearded man stood up among the audience and shouted, "Hind leader Mahatma Gandhi-ki-Jai." After Gandhiji's speech, a Muslim ran up the stairs, garlanded Mahatmaji, presented him an umbrella and sprinkled rose-water on him.

At Ooty the mass meeting was held on the Depot Maidan. It was the largest meeting held in living memory on the Nilgiris. The audience must have been about 9,000. A good number of Anglo-Indians and Europeans was present. Some of them used binoculars to see the Mahatma better. This ingenious method was resorted to only in this place.

The Harijans' address had asked that members of the community must be represented on the money disbursement committee. Replying, Gandhiji reminded that statements had been made that not only a large portion of the money collected would be spent in the

province or district but the bulk of it would be used only for constructive purposes. Naturally workers were expected to keep themselves in touch with the opinion and sentiments of Harijans as to its best use.

At Kodappanmandu, Ooty, a boy gave Gandhiji a photo of Mahatmaji himself.

"I can't sell it now," Gandhiji told him, as he had already left the platform.

The boy wondered a minute. But quickly he took out an auna piece from his pocket and gave it to the Mahatma.

"That's good!" came the recipient's remark.

When Gandhiji returned to the plains from Coonoor, Coimbatore sprang an agreeable surprise on him. Everywhere in the district there was the wildest enthusiasm and people contributed towards the fund in a manner that took one's breath away. Coimbatore gave Rs. 25,000 and this was a record so far. And at the public meetings alone not less than 45,000 people had gathered, of which at least 13,000 were women.

But the contiguous district of Trichinopoly did not rise to its full height. Trichy and its suburbs could not complain of lack of generosity with which the tour programme was drafted, but their contribution as a whole was not satisfactory.

Hosts' Gifts

At the Coimbatore ladies' meeting a lady garlanded Gandhiji with *khadi* yarn, saluted him in the Hindu fashion and turned to go away. But quickly he pointed at her jewels and asked for one. She took an ornament from her neck and gave it to him at once.

While he was at his residence, many ladies came to have his *darshan*. A young lady of 35 years old gave him a pair of bangles.

"Is she the lady of the house?" he asked the gentleman who was sitting by his side.

"Yes," the gentleman replied.

"Then, why only two?" asked the guest.

Immediately she took off a bangle from each hand and gave him another pair. He dispossessed another girl of 20 years of a pair of bangles in the same method.

Hostel Food

When Gandhiji paid a visit to the Harijan Hostel he made close enquiries as to whether the inmates were properly looked after.

"Running a hostel means," he put it to the gentleman-in-charge of the hostel, "feeding the members."

The gentleman replied in the affirmative and informed the visitor that half the amount for running it came from local collections and the other half was contributed by the provincial board.

"What food do they get?" Gandhiji asked.

"Rice, and vegetables," replied the gentleman and added in explanation, "kashewes, buttermilk."

"No milk?" interrupted Gandhiji.

"No."

"Ghee?" he asked again.

"No."

"Buttermilk every day?"

"Yes."

"What is the cost of one pint of buttermilk?"

The visitor began to go into the details of accounts and in the end found that the expenditure was small.

He concluded, "That is, they buy loose curd and churn it."

"Yet I am Alive"

At the Industrial Institute, Peelamedu, the host gave the Mahatma Rs. 500. A note book was held out to him for autograph. "Where is Rs. 5—five rupees for an autograph. The five hundred rupees is not for the autograph," said Gandhiji, laughing.

When he was writing his name, a gentleman worked a movie camera.

"You must pay for that too," he told the photographer.

"He has been shooting you all along," informed a by-stander.

"Yet I am alive," laughed Gandhiji.

When the host asked the visitor to get down from the car in which he was sitting all the time and to go to see the workshop, he replied: "You want me to get down? I shall ask money."

"Rs. 25," offered a man.

"You are a miser," remarked the guest without moving an inch.

"2,000 persons are waiting to see you," said another man, pointing to the place where there was a gathering. In the end, the host gave him Rs. 50 so that he might step into the workshop.

Gandhiji went to the meeting place and asked the women to present him ornaments. A girl came right from the middle of the crowd to give him bangles.

"Who are you?" he asked her, receiving the gift.

When the owner of the Institute, an old woman, came, he asked her in Hindi, "What have you brought?"

and patted her on the back. She bent down to touch his feet in worship. As she stood up again, he touched her chin with the tips of his fingers and laughed in joy.

Gandhiji went to a theatre in Coimbatore. On the stage a few actors were standing and at one end a low dais was put for him to sit on. As soon as he climbed up, he went to the clown and pointing at his glassless spectacles, asked: "Where did you get these from?" When he took his seat, three boy actors sang *Vandana*. After that, the little clown hopped about for a time, came near Gandhiji and, pointing at his own chest, shouted: "மஹாத்மஜே! என் மனசுக்கு என்னென்ற மஹாத்மஜேயைத்தான் (Mahatmaji! I keep you always in my mind. Laughter). The little actor had a picture of Gandhiji pinned on to his dress.

At the Udumalpet public meeting, while Gandhiji was auctioning a silver jar, a little girl gave him two bangles. He was informed that she presented them willingly, but her father was against giving them away.

"Then I would be introducing a quarrel between you and your father," he said to her without accepting them. She assured him that she willingly presented them to him.

"Are you a major?"

"I am twelve years old."

At this time her father, who was sitting near by, came up the steps and told the Mahatma that he permitted the gift.

"Now that I know your worth," Gandhiji told him, "you must give me more." The father replied that his daughter had already presented him bangles.

"Then help me to dispose of these articles," the auctioneer said to the father.

The gentleman bought a table-cloth.

An elderly Muslim came to the Mahatma with his child. He gave a present to Gandhiji and informed him that the child's name was Gandhi Sahib.

A man came with his baby to be named.

"Is the baby a girl?" asked the new priest.

"No, a boy," replied the father.

"What do you say to the name Rama?"

"Very well."

"Then, Rama," the Mahatma named the child.

When anxious friends asked the father, as he went down the steps from the platform, what name Gandhiji had given it, he told them "Gandhi-Raman."

"Christian Harijans"

The tour in Dindigul District (Dindigul is a Congress District) took him to the remotest places in the valley that lies between the Eastern and the Western Ghats. Not only Hindus but also Christians and Muslims took pride in according the warmest reception to the august visitor. Gandhiji's host at Cumbum was a Muslim. At Combai, Muslims also presented him with a purse. At Uttamapalayam, Christian and Hindu Harijans jointly presented him with an address. Referring to it at the Cumbum public meeting, he said:

"To the shame of Hindus I understand the term 'Hindu Harijans.' But it is difficult for me to understand the term 'Christian Harijans.' My heart goes to the Christians who are termed 'Christian Harijans.' I

have heard some learned pundits support untouchability on the basis of religion. But I have never met a Christian, learned or otherwise, who has defended untouchability on behalf of religion. I, therefore, must confess that the poison has spread into the ranks of Christians. But if I begin the task of removing untouchability from Christians, I shall be crossing my limits. Christians, whether Roman Catholics or Protestants, must understand the present movement in India and they must also remove untouchability in their ranks."

Miss Lester's Part

The Dindigul public meeting deserves special mention. There was an audience' of 17,000, of whom over 5,000 were women. A massive platform was erected and that without any expenditure of money. An umbrella was held above Gandhiji's seat, although it was night. On it was written *The Nation's Youth League, Dindigul*. Gandhiji's car drove to the platform at high speed, for there was a broad path leading to it and the crowd did not block the way. Hundreds of people were waiting to hear him from the early hours of the evening.

While Gandhiji took up a picture for auction, Miss Muriel Lester asked him, "What's the price?"

"I don't know," he replied, "but you can give any price."

She gave him Rs. 2.

"This shows that you are rich," he remarked, laughing.

At the Manachanallur village meeting, Miss Lester and Mrs. Hogg went into the gathering with hat in hand to collect money.

Bodis' Perseverence

Bodinayakanoor showed the greatest enthusiasm in welcoming Gandhiji. The people of Bodi had fought hard to include their town in the itinerary. As the place was in the grip of plague, it was removed from the tour programme. But the people were determined to have *darsana* and so they came to a place called Bodavetakka, eight miles from their town, where Gandhiji spoke to them. The meeting was held in the hot sun at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Yet there was a huge gathering. A large number of people had come there in double-bullock carts and motor-buses. Resourceful people that the Bodis are, they had brought many bundles of sugarcane to eat in order to quench their thirst in the hot sun.

The Harijan Sevak Sangh of Bodi rightly began their welcome address thus:

"Friend of the Poor!

Welcome! Welcome!! A hearty welcome!!!
Blessed is the city to merit thy visit and ours is the good fortune to receive thee."

Waste of Money

Holding up the garlands for sale at the Sholavandan mass meeting, Gandhiji said:

"Some of you insist on presenting garlands. You must pay for them. Presentation of addresses means waste of money: that is, so much food is taken away from the mouth of Harijans. I do not forget that the garlands are a token of your affection. But I would like your affection to take a practical shape. I am praying in the evening of my life on behalf of those whom we have suppressed. And, therefore, whenever I find any money is wasted, it grieves me. Therefore, I want to get from

you so much as I can by stimulating your generous instinct. That is why I want to sell the garlands. You can offer anything."

Immediately the garlands were sold.

"No Cigarettes and Whisky"

At the Bhavani public meeting Gandhiji held up a beautiful needle-work for bid. He started the sale: "Bid for the tiger."

"It is a lion," corrected the local leader, who was sitting by his side.

"Tiger and lion are the same," remarked the seller, "they are kinsmen."

"Rs. 5," offered the first bidder.

"Don't take it for Rs. 5, if you can help it?" he appealed. "This is a harmless tiger."

While he was auctioning the articles, a Harijan girl was helped on to his car to garland him. He put out his hand to receive the garland, but she insisted on putting it round his neck.

"You insist; so I must also insist," he said in retaliation, and quickly, before she could get down, took a garland of marigold that lay by his side and put it on her correctly.

A man presented Gandhiji a spurious *khadi* cloth—mill *khadi*. Another man came with another article, when he was asked what it was.

"Cigarettes," he replied timidly.

"No cigarettes and whisky, please," remarked C.R. The man sat down.

Tired out

Travel was becoming difficult day by day owing to hot sun. The journey from Dindigul

to Cumbum was quite fatiguing. After travelling 45 miles from Trichinopoly to Karur by train, he dashed 79 miles in the evening from Karur to the Gandhi Ashram. On the way he addressed not less than five meetings. It was nearly ten o'clock at night when he addressed the public meeting at Trichengode. He was talking to Dr. Rajan, when a Harijan came to garland him. He leaned forward to oblige the young man, who held the garland in his hands. As he leaned, he yawned in fatigue and in sleepiness. He began his speech with the sentence, "I am tired out."

Pudupalayam as Test

At the public meeting held at the Gandhi Ashram, Gandhiji said :

"You know I have come here to visit nothing but the *Ashram*. It is very likely or more than likely that I would not have come to Pudupalayam but for it. That does not mean that I do not want the change of heart that I am asking for from caste Hindus. I have come here to see what services it has been rendering to you. It being in your midst, my visit must be considered superfluous.

"In spite of the *Ashram* working in your midst, if the taint of untouchability is not removed, I should despair. As a matter of fact, places like Pudupalayam are to serve as tests to find out how far caste-Hindu minds have changed. For, you have here a set of servants of the people, who are free from the taint of untouchability. They are pledged to regard Harijans as their blood brothers and sisters. And I would like to think that you here also are treating Harijans in the same manner. But I know that that is not your

position today. Though you have made considerable headway, you have yet to make progress to get rid of untouchability altogether. You still like the distinction of high and low. You still feel, some of you at any rate, if Harijans came to their own, they would not render you the same services as they do today. I think it is wrong."

God's Tool

Gandhiji had to arrive at Shiyali almost an hour late. From 8 o'clock in the morning people began to gather at the place of meeting. At half past ten they were told that Mahatmaji would come only an hour later and, therefore, they could go home for food and return to the meeting in time. But they lingered about under the shady mango trees so that they could easily get positions of vantage.

In reply to the atheistic group of young men, Gandhiji said: "I can give them the assurance that I am not a tool in the hands of anybody, but in the hands of Almighty God."

At this juncture shouts of "soda, soda" rose below the platform. At once Gandhiji saw what the matter was and told Dr. Rajan, who was translating his speech: "Rajan, there is a boy fainting. There is all the paraphernalia in my bag. You go and attend."

Amidst Children

At his residence in Shiyali when Gandhiji was taking food, Miss Anne Marie Petersen, the Principal of the National Christian Girls' School at Port Novo, came with her students. Miss Petersen, who is habitually dressed in Indian style, sat by his side and the little

children ran to him and hung about his neck. A child leaned on his back. He caught hold of two children in his arms and pretended to knock their heads against each other, saying, "This is the way to fight." He laughed merrily and hugged them to his bosom.

Miss Petersen introduced her assistants and some of the students. Pointing to a plump-looking girl she said to Gandhiji, "This is how the Danish people look when they come to India." As his eyes fell on the two persons, she added "When they are in India, they go like this," and stood on her toes stretching her body up and hands above the head to indicate leanness.

Gandhiji talked with the children as he ate fruits. They put out their hands calling him "tata" (grandpa). He gave them oranges. They ate them quickly and asked for more. He went on giving them fruits. They all had a nice time and the children ate more than the old man.

After taking food, he began to spin and continued the conversation. The children fanned him. A lady, who came with a child, did him *sawastar*. He exclaimed: "O you have bangles! Give me, please."

She removed forthwith four bangles and presented them to him.

She was loaded with jewels.

Another woman knelt before him and held up her hands in prayer to him. She said: "I am very glad to see you. I was quite happy even when I saw your picture. I am delighted to see you."

A little girl stood by his side and observed him spin. A European child told Gandhiji pointing at her: "She has plenty of jewels."

"I see, she must give," he replied.

"I have not any," the European child added, shaking her head and turning her palms sideways to convey her meaning.

When Gandhiji got into the train, he asked Miss Petersen: "How many lost?"

"I have not counted yet," she replied, smiling.

(Gandhiji asked her whether all the children had been brought safely to the train).

"Go and see Mira," he told her.

Best-clad Boy

"Who conducts the school?" Gandhiji asked as soon as he entered the Harijan School in Vellore. "How many children are there?" was his next question.

"In all the school this is the best-clad boy," he remarked tickling the cheek of a child, who came slipping in between two men's legs.

"He is not a Harijan," a by-stander informed Gandhiji.

"That serves him right," commented the visitor.

"He is an outsider," again came the information.

"Perfect outsider" laughed Gandhiji.

(The little boy, who got so much attention, was stark naked.)

As soon as the Mahatma stepped into the school, the children sang welcome songs.

In Jolly Mood

When he went to the Municipal Office at Vellore to receive the address, he was in a jolly mood.

"Does the plate go back to you or to Harijans?" he asked the Chairman, who gave him a silver plate full of rupees.

"To you," replied the giver.

"Very good. Let me see what it brings."

Turning to the audience, he asked: "Who will bid?"

"If you act as a commission agent, I may get Rs. 100," he told the Chairman.

"Rs. 40," came the first bid. There was no other bid for a minute or two.

"This is an auction where there is only one bid," Gandhiji laughed.

The bid rose to Rs. 50.

Where are the Purses?

"Where are the purses?" Gandhiji asked, when the North Arcot District Board address was presented to him in the Board Office.

The members were taken aback.

"Where is the Harijan purse? Where is the Bihar purse?" he asked again.

"No purse," said the member, who read the address on behalf of the Chairman.

"Then I won't go. If you don't give me two fat purses, I won't go." He beat the arms of the chair and slumped on its back. It seemed as though he was resolved to have his will.

"What nonsense! The small Municipality gave me a purse of Rs. 200. You do not want to give?" he added.

Gandhiji himself translated these remarks in Hindi to the President, Mr. C. Abdul Hakim,

"I give you Rs. 200," offered the President.

"That is all right," the guest accepted the gift. "What about your Councillors? If I wanted money from you alone, I can go to Madras and take it."

Immediately the members consulted one another and subscribed on the spot Rs. 201 in all. A Harijan member gave one rupee.

More Autographs

At the Vellore public meeting a boy asked Gandhiji for his autograph. He gave the Mahatma a fountain pen.

"Rs. 5 " demanded Gandhiji.

"You take the pen."

"Is it worth Rs. 5?"

"No."

"You don't want me to reduce the amount due to Harijans?"

The boy stood silent.

"What is the price of the fountain pen?" Gandhiji asked him again, and signed his name.

"Rs. 3," the boy replied and took the autograph gladly.

At Jalarpet Railway Junction a young Andhra came for his autograph. He wanted it in Telugu.

"I have forgotten," replied Gandhiji.

But the young man pointed out the word "Gandhi" in a Telugu book. Thereupon he wrote down the letters one by one and asked "Is this right?"

The train was about to leave Trichinopoly Junction for Tanjore when a lad came for his autograph. Gandhiji took the money from his hand and signed his name on a piece of paper saying: "You want the

autograph in Tamil. I don't think you can read Devanagiri."

"Doctor's boy wants to say good-bye to you," said some one to Gandhiji.

"Without face? That is not good manners," remarked the Mahatma.

When the train began to move, he saluted the crowd, in which were many familiar faces, and said: "I don't think I shall meet you again for some years." The whistle of the engine was lost in the shouts of "Jai."

Nattar-Harijan Trouble

Just before leaving Devakotah Mahatma Gandhi granted an interview to the representatives of Nattars in connection with the Nattar-Harijan trouble that had been taking place during the last two preceeding years. The Nattar representatives were sitting on a carpet that was spread on the floor of a *pandal* in Gandhiji's residence. Gandhiji came there from his room with his hands in front of his chest in the Hindu salutation posture. As he came very near, the Nattars stood up in reverence. He sat on the low parapet that was erected round the *pandal* and leaned upon a pillar. "Very good," he said as he sat down and crossed his folded left leg over the right. The Nattars sat down.

There were more than 150 Nattars; the *pandal* was full and so some of them had to stand or sit outside.

The interpreter told the Nattar representatives that Gandhiji was prepared to answer questions. Thereupon their spokesman submitted that they would hear him and would follow him. The spokesman was an old

man and leaned upon his walkingstick. He stood at a distance facing the Mahatma.

"I am glad that I meet so many of the Nattar representatives," Gandhiji began. "when I have come to know of the trouble between Nattars and Harijans. I was very much grieved to learn that there was injury done to a single Harijan. For instance, I hear some Nattars, or many of you, object to Harijans' wearing the clothes they wish to. You object to Harijan women's wearing bodices. You insist on Harijans' doing certain things for you. You object to their making use of the very temple to the building of which they have contributed. Well, if any Harijan transgresses the limits, he comes in for bodily injury. Now I suggest to you it is wrong to injure any person bodily or otherwise when he does not do as you would have him do. That is called taking law into one's own hands. If any person does what is wrong, we have to bring it to the notice of the Police or put him in court. If a person is like me, he won't go to the law court but will suffer. But I tell you by what the Harijans have done they have not transgressed law. But I want to go a step further. Just now I am touring from one end of India to the other to tell the Hindus that it is a sin to consider a single human being as an untouchable, that it is sinful to consider any single human being as lower than ourselves, that Harijans have the same rights as you and I and other Hindus have. That is to say, they can dress as they like and they have the right to public roads, public temples, public schools, public caravanserais. So far as we deprive a single Hindu of these rights we are doing sin. Except for the use of temples, non-Hindus have the same rights as we have. Neo-Hindus have no right to enter temples because they do

not belong to the Hindu faith. I was talking to a Nattar this morning. I had a nice friendly chat with him. When I tackled him, he said that in his village they did not object to Harijans' wearing any dress. But, he said that they must not enter temples and they must wear a particular dress on temple festival days. I asked him why. He said that it was the custom. I told him customs are of two kinds, bad and good. We Hindus have many bad customs. Untouchability, I told him, was a bad custom. But you may reject what I say, and say that untouchability is a good custom. Then either I have to convince you that untouchability is a bad custom, or you to convince me that it is a good custom. Nobody can say that a custom, good or bad, must be followed. I say there is only one God. No Hindu, no human being ever said there are many gods. And our *Śāstras* say that God has created the universe. Therefore, we are all His children. I ask you as fathers, whether you make distinction between your children. Any father worthy of being a father will resent the suggestion that he does not treat his children equally. Will God, the creator of all of us, be less just than we are? But then, of course, there are those who will say untouchability is God-inspired. You may ask why should you believe me and not the other man, who has read the *Śāstras*. Then I say there is no warrant for untouchability as we practice it to day. You need not believe me or the other man, because the *Śāstras* themselves say nothing can be done or said which is against reason. If somebody said there was warrant in the *Śāstras* for untouchability and I said there was not you can consult your conscience as to what you should do. And lastly, I can tell you, so far as learned men are concerned, there are many learned men in

India today, they say that there is no warrant in the *Shastras* for untouchability. Do not for a moment be afraid that I have to do something for Harijans by going to court. My business is to appeal to your reason and convince you.

"I am here only for a few minutes, during which I wanted myself to tell you what is wrong in Hinduism, and therefore I have come to tell you that I should like you to treat Harijans as your blood brothers and sisters—they are, because all of you and Harijans are the children of Bharat Mata. Now you can ask me any questions you like or ask me to help you to clear your doubts."

Plea of Custom

In a stentorian voice the spokesman of the Nattars informed Gandhiji: "Now we have given separate wells for Harijans to take water. We don't object to their drawing water from those wells."

"How will you treat them if they were your brothers?" asked the Mahatma at once.

"Formerly we used to draw water from wells or take it from tanks and pour it to them," the spokesman explained his community's change of attitude.

"Very good," remarked Gandhiji, calmly.

"We don't object to Harijans wearing jewels," added the representative.

"Very good," repeated Gandhiji to show that he followed the speaker.

"With regard to the dress," the old man put it bluntly, "they must not wear new modes of dress, when they come to our homes, and on festive and public

occasions." His eyes caught something before he added, "Women can wear any dress."

As the statement came, Gandhiji broke in, "I have to pick a quarrel now. Why should you prescribe their dress?"

"We have fixed the mode of dress to many castes," eluded the resourceful old man, "according to their vocations or works. Custom must not be transgressed."

"I suggest it to you," Gandhiji repeated what he had said in his prologue, "it is wrong, although it is a custom. You will resent it, if you Nattars were compelled to wear only a particular dress."

"We are bound down by customs," the old Nattar admitted with a proud lift of his head. "We observe all customs obtaining amongst us."

Gandhiji shook his head and pointed out: "We have that canker of superiority and inferiority."

"If anything goes against custom, who is to say it is good or bad?" asked the gentleman after a short pause.

"If customs are bad," the advocate of reforms replied, "they must go."

The old man reiterated his assertion, "I say that for Harijans not to observe customs is bad."

"Then I am defeated," Gandhiji admitted, when he found that the spokesman stood to his guns.

After awhile the Nattars' representative asked another question: "If customs are broken, who will do the works that are now assigned to particular castes?"

"That I understand is your case," remarked Gandhiji as he began to probe into it. "Yours is a bad

case. Things were done in many parts of India according to custom. But when people found they were wrong, they gave it up. No man—this is the law of the land—shall determine what is good for another man, or what another should or should not do. Suppose you want Harijans to do something, for instance, they must do scavenging for all time. Also suppose they cease to be afraid of you and they do not care for your money, then you cannot force them to do it by a decree of the court."

"Are you talking about law or ordinary canons of justice," asked the representative loudly. He seemed to be rather excited and so some of his friends cautioned him. He told them: "I am speaking in my usual tone. I am not in a temper. You know the way in which I talk."

"I am doing both," coolly replied the Mahatma, "According to the ordinary canons of justice what you do is wrong. Even the law of the land will not tolerate what you do."

"If all people are agreed on certain things and conduct themselves accordingly, then there is justice," the spokesman defined. "Is it proper to resort to law?"

"So you have come to the starting point," pointed out Gandhiji.

"I may tell you," the gentleman volunteered an information to Mahatma Gandhi, "that there is no discontent anywhere in our villages, which number ninety-six. Customs have been observed so long by Nattars and Harijans. Recently Christian missionaries have brought about this trouble."

"Trouble will come," Gandhiji admitted, "when your house is not in order."

"It is not so," denied the spokesman. "Missionaries tempt Harijans with fine jobs, pretty girls and good positions, and convert them. Some of the converts do now with a vengeance daub their forehead with holy ashes and say they have come back to Hinduism."

It was amusing to hear him as he spoke with gestures. He drew his fingers across his forehead, chest and arms.

"I am not concerned with what the Christian missionaries do. I am concerned with Hindus and Hinduism. I have to tell you Harijans are Hindus and we must treat them as Hindus."

When Gandhiji had made his position clear, the spokesman offered an explanation. "I only mention this to you," he concluded, "as the cause for Harijans' discontent."

Before he finished with the subject, Gandhiji gave a resume of his speech. He said: "You will do wrong to think that you are superior to Harijans and that you can dictate to them as to what they should wear or not. This will create bad blood. You cannot prevent them from doing what they like by pointing out customs. When there is a little bit of time to do things in the right manner, let us do it."

Appeal for Bihar Relief

"I must close this," Gandhiji rung up the curtain on a new scene, "and bring you to Bihar. Bihar is a country like Chettinad but much bigger." He drew a colourful picture of the sufferings of the people who were afflicted by earthquake and appealed to Nattars to contribute to the relief fund. "You can commence

to pay," he concluded his speech. "We have to disperse in two or three minutes."

While the conversation was going on a number of people who were not concerned in the affairs had come there, and in response to the appeal they paid the Mahatma their coppers and silvers.

The spokesman of the Nattars promised Gandhiji to collect money from the members of his community and send it on to him.

As soon as the conversation was over a lad allowed his way through the crowd and dashed to Mahatmajl with an open note-book and money in his hand to get his autograph.

Advice to Kannada

LESS UNTOUCHABILITY IN COORG

Although isolated from the rest of the country, Coorg had understood the real spirit of Gandhiji's gospel. Even to a casual observer it was clear that the sin of untouchability was not so bad as it was in other parts of the country. Judging from the vast crowds that assembled to hear him and the reception given to him, it could be said that Coorg was as zealous in his cause as any other part. The two days' tour there was not only pleasant but also profitable. The *cheris* were clean, especially the one at Kaikeri, of which he said that he had not in his life-time seen such a clean and tidy *cheri*.

At the Udukeri public meeting, he said: "In your address you have rightly called my visit an unexpected one. Although Coorg was not first included in the programme, I afterwards decided to spend two days here." After praising the natural beauty of the land, he continued: "It is no wonder to me, therefore, that in this land where nature has so lavishly blessed you untouchability is not so vicious as in other parts."

At Virajpet, a Muslim presented the visitor an address in Urdu, replying to which he said: "The address asks me to work to unite Hindus and Muslims all over India, as they are united here. I am working

for unity among all classes of people. If necessary, I shall lay down my life for the sake of unity among the people inhabiting India. All my activities run into one another, and they all arise from my insatiable love of mankind."

In the course of his speech at Somwarpet, he said: "It is a matter of pleasure to me that untouchability is not so bad here as in other parts of India. But even here Harijans are not allowed into the temples. That is, in my opinion, a great flaw."

He made a memorable speech at Mercara. He said: "These two days have been agreeable to me, not because of the beautiful scenery, but because untouchability is less vicious here. In your business-like address you have confined yourselves to facts and figures. I appreciate the business-like manner in which you have presented the address, which is a report. It is a matter of regret that Harijans are daily becoming landless. I see what little land they possess is lying fallow. It is up to the local Harijan Sevak Sangh to examine critically and to see whether it is not possible to prevent Harijans from becoming landless. It may be there are economic causes which are not within your province to prevent. It, therefore, becomes necessary for the Harijan Sevak Sangh to understand why Harijans become landless. It may be that, as a result of investigation it may be found that although they are landless, they are not economically poorer. Should it be otherwise, as I am afraid it will be, it is for the Harijan Sevak Sangh to apply measures to prevent the evil.

"Next question is the temple entry question. It seems to be monstrous that public opinion here should not be able to open temples to Harijans. I see that you

have no fixed prejudices such as I see on the plains. I, therefore, ask all workers to apply themselves to the solution of this problem. And I would like you to cherish the ambition that you will lead the rest of India.

"I would like also to mention to you the sufferers of Bihar. You are living somewhat in isolation from the rest of India. You also seem to be self-contained. I hope that has not hardened your heart. You are a part of India. The sufferings of Indians in the extreme north must be shared by you also like other Indians."

"I Love Harijans"

As soon as Gandhiji finished his speech, a young man went to him and, putting a small note-book and a rupee before him, asked for autograph.

"Give Rs 5," Gandhiji asked him in turn.

"I am poor. I cannot give Rs. 5. Autograph must be given for love. If you love me, you have to write your name in this note-book. If you don't love me, you don't love human beings. Then you don't love Harijans.

"I love Harijans," protested Gandhiji mildly. "I have come for money for their uplift."

"Mahatmaji, you can take this rupee and the autograph-book. I don't want them."

He gave the book to Gandhiji, who auctioned it.

"Now I have got Rs. 6. So I can give my autograph," he said. "I have done your work."

Gandhiji gave the autograph on a loose sheet of paper.

The Fishermen's Contributions

In South Kanara as in Coorg the reception given to Gandhiji was uniformly grand and the enthusiasm of

the public keen. In the small towns of Moodky and Udipt the people bid enthusiastically at the auction sale, the proceeds of which would be considered creditable to far larger towns. The total collections for the Harijan fund amounted to Rs. 9,000 and odd, besides jewellery, and this figure was, indeed, large, when the contribution that the district had made to the relief of the sufferers of Bihar was also considered. The fishermen community at Mangalore and Moodky drew the visitors' attention by their liberal donations. The volunteer organisation was better here than in Tamil Nadu, and at Coondapur the Islamic Volunteer Corps and the Gandhi Reception Volunteers worked in harmony in controlling the crowd.

A Slip of the Tongue

At Bantwal, when Gandhiji was about to address the audience, a lad presented him a silver cup and a saucer, and some *khadi*.

He held out a book for autograph and requested, "Please write a motto also for my life."

"Why do you want a motto? There is the Harijan service," was the reply.

"A change has come over me as I see you today," explained the youth. "This is the last time I see you."

"Am I going to die," quickly interrupted Gandhiji, "before you see me again?"

"No, sir," he said making the first word a big mouthful. He immediately realised the awkwardness of the situation in which the slip of his tongue had placed him. He added: "I have been praying to God to give me a chance to see you. Now I have got it."

"So you mean you see me for the first time."

"Yes, sir, yes, sir," the boy agreed and touched the Mahatma's feet in worship.

Problem of Salt

The address presented to Gandhiji at Jnanodya Samaj, Mangalore, mentioned that free supply of salt would greatly help the fishermen community. He replied: "I myself belong to a fishermen village. I am glad your efforts are crowned with some measure of success. What you say about salt for fishermen is too true. One day we shall tackle that problem. I have, however, no sense of despair about it. It is a humane cause. A humane cause, when properly backed, never suffers."

Oldest Institution

Mahatmaji, when he paid a visit to the Depressed Classes Mission School, went to the hostel kitchen. He asked the host, "What food do the students get?"

"In the morning *khajir*, in the afternoon rice, dal etc., and fish at night," came the reply,

"Buttermilk?"

"Its introduction is being considered."

In the Central Hall of the School Gandhiji sat on the raised platform, and the Roman Catholic priests sat behind him. The boys sang a welcome to the visitor. A boy put on him a garland of rose, marigold and green leaves. There were bundles of *khaddar* clothes in front of him, which were later distributed to the students. In his address to them he said: "I congratulate you on all the attentions that are given to you and I hope that, when you grow up, you will conduct yourselves in such a way that it may be said that

you deserved all these attentions. I came to know only yesterday that this mission is the oldest institution in India. I wish it every success."

A Harijan's House

Mahatma Gandhi visited two *cheris* in Mangalore. In one *cheri* the children recited Ramanam. In another *cheri* he was taken to a house. It was a fine house, which was kept clean. There was furniture and the walls of the drawing-room were decorated with pictures.

"How many rupees have you got?" asked Gandhiji of the lady who was introduced to him as the owner of the house.

"No money at all," she replied mockly with her hands joined together in worship.

"You have a fine house," Gandhiji remarked, smiling.

"I borrowed money and built it."

"Now have you discharged the debt?" he anxiously enquired.

"I have mortgaged the house for Rs. 400. I have cleared the debt to the extent of Rs. 200."

He was pleased to know that the house was built from her and her husband's earnings.

When he made an appeal at the Canara High School to admit more Harijans into it, he said that there was no difference between Harijan and caste Hindu boys. As an instance, he referred to the house which he visited earlier in the day and expressed his appreciation of it as follows: "It was a princely house. There were large rooms. There was not a single particle of dust.

There was not much to distinguish between the palace of the Senior Maharani of Travancore and this house. She was exceedingly intelligent."

Poor Bid

Gandhiji received a wagon-load of presents in South Kanara. At the Mangalore public meeting he was presented a wooden model of himself working at the spinning-wheel. This toy was enclosed in a case, on one side of which was a pane. By winding up a spring the toy could be made to spin.

"Let me see what it brings," said the great auctioneer as he received it. "Look at the champion spinner here," he introduced this article to the bidders. "He spins and yet toils not."

The bid started at Rs. 5 and in six leaps it reached Rs. 35 in less than two minutes.

The Mahatma had to goad the audience to bid for the articles. A little later he introduced a *khadar* piece. "This is nice *khad*. I mean it is durable. It was given to me to be presented to Harijan children, but I propose to sell it to make more. You must give me a tempting price."

It was knocked down for a paltry sum of Rs. 7. In the closing stages he observed: "I have many things yet with me. I do not want to tire you. But I have a bag of arcanut. Its cost price is Rs. 25." This article was taken away for Rs. 30.

He concluded the proceedings saying: "I thank the bidders for helping me to dispose of these things. I have received so many things that I dare not offer any more. I hope to sell them elsewhere."

The Girl Who Wept

He sold articles for Rs. 388 at Udipi, but in the end he said laughing, "I can certify now that the Udipi people are proper Banias."

A little girl of eight years old read the Hindi address

"To welcome me you must give me money. I will take away all these," he said to her pointing at her ornaments.

She read the relevant portion of the address and gave it to him.

"What will you give me with the address," he asked again.

"All that I have," replied she.

She held out her left hand and requested him to take the bangle.

"No, you remove it," he said to her.

She immediately gave him her gold bangles and necklace.

"Have you your father's permission?"

She nodded her head in the affirmative.

"So you have become a Kaumati," he remarked.

She stood still, when he remarked, "Oh, you are weeping! Who will accept the jewels from a girl who gives them weeping? Please you have them."

He patted her affectionately.

She did not take them back; but he returned them to her.

She went down the platform but returned before he had finished his speech. She waited patiently till the auction sale was over and again presented the jewels to him.

" You won't weep again ? " he asked her. She shook her head and smiled. Her name is Kumari Neerupama.

The Work of Municipalities

In Karnatak he was told in many places that untouchability was devoid of its virus there, where the Linghayat community itself had been at the uplift work for some time past. When Gandhiji visited some of the places in Bellary that are generally considered backward, there was as great enthusiasm on the part of the masses as in any other part of the country.

One feature of the addresses in Karnatak was that almost all the municipalities quoted figures to show what work they had done for the uplift of Harijans. " The Sirsi Municipality has always been sympathetic towards Harijana and has declared all tanks and wells open to them," said the civic address. " No untouchability is observed in schools and other public places. It has given financial help to the local Sevak Sangh to the extent of Rs. 150 and is willing to give more, if need be. Special facilities are given to Harijan boys as regards free tuition. The percentage of literacy among the Harijans in the town is eleven. The Municipality will shortly devise schemes for the proper housing of its Harijan employees and for the redemption of their debts."

Sometime before Gandhiji's visit, Sirsi had opened the Mariamman Temple to Harijans.

The Gadag-Betgeri Municipal address said : " The Harijan localities are free from all taxes. We have taken care to provide them with all civic amenities. Each of the localities or *keries* is provided with wells, electric

lights, etc. Their children are admitted in all our secondary and primary schools. In addition to this, we have provided them with two separate schools. We have made primary education free to all; so the Harijans enjoy this privilege in common with others. Their students in the High School are admitted free, whereas in the case of other students the number of free scholars is restricted to 15 per cent. only. We have two Harijan teachers on the staff of our primary schools."

The Hubli Municipality, whose address to Gandhiji, it was remarked, was the first ever presented to a non-official public worker, unfolded an equally good record.

In the Steamer

Gandhiji crossed the Gangooly at Coondapur in a steam launch and gave *darshan* to the vast multitude that had gathered on the bank of the river in Gangooly village. Thence the launch went to the steam-ship that lay at anchor. The captain and other officers of the steam-ship "Dayavati" welcomed him heartily. As soon as he boarded the ship, he went to the cabin-deck, from where he saluted those who had come in the *panamars* (country boats) to give him a send-off. He stood there till the vessel sailed away.

When it cast anchor off the coast of Buttal to take cargo, two *panamars* came rowing fast. In them were men, women and children, who shouted repeatedly "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-Jai" and "Bharat Mata-ki-Jai."

Shortly after boarding the steamer Gandhiji had a nap. Then he attended to correspondence, as he sat

साथी संग

साथी संग



On the boat, while crossing the Kalyanapuram



Saluting from the Cabin-deck

तापी संघ
का कार्यालय



Bathing in the sea at Cape Comorin.



Hands over the gifts to C. B. at the Katpadi meeting

on the deck basking in the sun. He worked at the spinning-wheel in the afternoon. In the evening he took a stroll listening to the songs sung by two of the members of the party. After sunset he began his prayer. He recited the last verses in the second chapter of the *Gita*. The congregation sang in chorus the *Bhajan* song *Raghupati Raghovira Rajaram*. The Captain, the Chief Engineer and the Inspector attended the prayer.

The *Dayanathi* anchored off Karwar at nine o'clock at night and Gandhiji went ashore in a boat. There thousands of people had gathered to catch a glimpse of him.

All places which Gandhiji visited in North Kanara were tastefully decorated. To begin with, the town of Karwar, a beauty spot on the West Coast, was *en fete*. He addressed the public meeting early next morning. As he climbed down the platform, a Harijan woman ran up to him and caught hold of his legs. Her feeling was too deep for words. She shed tears of joy. It took a few minutes for people to persuade her to let him go.

At Ankola

The Chairman of the Gandhi Reception Committee at Ankola was the Rev. P. T. Verughesa, who had the privilege of garlanding the Mahatma.

A young man told the visitor, "I have to introduce the Harijan members of the Reception Committee."

"Why do you not introduce them?" hastened Gandhiji. "Do it."

"I have to introduce myself as the Secretary of the Committee," began the young man.

"There is nothing like self-introduction," remarked the Mahatma, making his acquaintanceship.

About twenty-five members were introduced to the guest. When Harijans were introduced, he garlanded them. Ankola got more of his time than was allotted to it, because the function took a gubernatorial turn.

From Karwar Gandhiji drove further down the coast to Kumta. His residence there was besieged by women and so he came out to have a short talk with them and get their jewels. As the public meeting was to be held just outside the compound, people gathered in large numbers inside and outside it. It was hard for Gandhiji to make his way through the crowd to the platform and there was such a noise that it was not possible for him to make a speech.

Temples and Animal Sacrifice

A pleasant drive up the ghat road, which was thickly shaded by gigantic trees, brought him to Sirsi, which lies nearly 2,000 feet above sea level. After leaving Tandal Nadi, this was the first place where a microphone was fitted. In this small place over the mountain, not less than 6,000 people had gathered to see and hear the benefactor of Harijans. It was an extraordinarily quiet crowd. One might have heard a pin fall, when Gandhiji spoke as follows:

"There are many of my friends here. If I do not come here for Harijan work, where shall I go? I am not surprised to hear that the Municipality has given assistance to the Harijan Sevak Sangh and it is striving to spread education among Harijan children. If it were otherwise, I should have been surprised.

"I am thankful to you for having opened the Mariyamman Temple to Harijans. I am sorry you

sacrifice animals to the deity. I do not consider a temple where animal sacrifice is offered as a place of sanctity. In other countries animals are not sacrificed in the name of religion. I do not think God will be propitiated by animal sacrifice. God must be propitiated by self-sacrifice. So I request you not to offer animal sacrifice. I do not like temples where animal sacrifice is offered to be thrown open to Harijans."

At this time a mechanic came on the platform and turned the microphone towards the speaker's face.

"It is the translation that the people must hear," said Gandhiji.

"The people are anxious to hear you," remonstrated the mechanic.

"When I auction these I shall speak on the loud-speaker," agreed Gandhiji, pointing to a heap of articles that lay in front of him.

When he held the wooden casket for auction, the bid rose to Rs. 30.

"*Moobarke rapaye andu sur* (Rs. 30 once)," he cried amidst general laughter.

"Look here! When he wants money, he speaks in Kannada," commented Mr. Gangadhararao Deshpande.

When the sale was over, collections were made at the gathering, which amounted to Rs. 375. This was because the meeting was perfectly orderly and the volunteers were able to reach each and every one of the audience.

Beyond Expectation

Gandhiji left Sirsi for Siddapur at 7 o'clock in the morning. But the mountain road was covered with mist and so it took an hour and a quarter to travel a

distance of twentytwo miles. When he reached the place, the mist had not disappeared and so he went to the platform about fifteen minutes late. But even at that hour those that were standing at the far end of the gathering could not be discerned.

The meeting was ably managed. Four foot-paths led to the platform. An audience of 3,500 sat quietly on the ground. Gandhiji walked a distance of eighty yards to the platform from the road without any hindrance.

The public purse was Rs. 188, which was considered to have exceeded expectation, because the people had suffered a heavy loss in the Civil Disobedience and much was not expected of them. The Harijans' purse contained Rs. 8-8-0. A Harijan presented Gandhiji a cow and a calf, which the latter made a gift of to the local Mariyamman Temple, which had been thrown open to all Hindus. Strangely enough, the little contributions made to the Bihar relief amounted to Rs. 169.

On his way to Siddapur Gandhiji gave *darshan* to a small gathering of people at Kansur village. When he asked for the purse, they told him to come there once again. On his return journey he stopped there to receive the purse. In the meantime, the crowd had swelled and the villagers collected a larger amount than they had earlier in the morning. They had all actively participated in the no-tax campaign and had incurred heavy loss on that account.

Villagers' Joy

Lively crowds were seen all along the way from Sirsi to Haveri. At Dasagoppa village 500 people were waiting to have *darshan* of the Mahatma, but, as he was

sleeping, the car did not stop there. They, however, handed a small purse to the members of the party who were in the second car. The villagers also complained that he had sadly disappointed them. His car had hardly gone a mile from the village when a tyre burst. Some women who happened to be on the spot saw him. Immediately a girl ran to the village to inform her friends of the mishap. The villagers came running to the place and were greatly satisfied on seeing him.

At the village of Samaagi boys carried a placard on which was written, "Please spare a few minutes." Another placard read "Untouchables' Society, Samaagi." After a few miles' drive from here the tyre of Gandhiji's car again burst and so he got into another car to reach the village of Aloor in time.

As soon as he reached Haveri, he paid a visit to the Lingayat Jagadguru Murugatejendra Mahaswami of Chitaldrug, who assured him of his support to the Harijan uplift.

At Devanagiri the Police and the volunteers were not able to control the crowd, which kept pressing towards the platform. Standing in the midst of priests, who recited the *Vedas*, Gandhiji laid the foundation-stone of the Harijan students' hostel near the platform. The men broke into the ladies' section of the audience. A lady, who wanted to present a gold bangle to the Mahatma, could not come out of the crowd. So she contented herself by passing it on to him.

Komutti Guests

At a private residence in Bellary a young man garlanded Gandhiji on behalf of the Y.M.A., and gave him a purse. Another gentleman offered him oranges on a plate and orange juice in a tumbler.

"Please don't give me that," said the guest to him, but asked, "Where is the purse?"

As it was put into his hands, he asked, "How much?"

There was no answer.

"I know why you hesitate to mention it. It is too small," he remarked, feeling its weight.

"Rs. 150," informed the giver.

"This won't do. I must get more."

A few more loose rupees were given him by some of those who were close by. After ascertaining how much he had got there, he continued: "Rs. 300 won't do. I know Bellary. Yesterday was a day of disappointment — disappointment from place to place. If Bellary is going to disappoint....." He left the sentence unfinished and added, laughing, "If you don't give a fat purse, I won't go from this house."

A few more people gave him some money. After keeping quiet for a short time he told them, "What is the use of giving white metal? I want yellow metal."

He appealed to the ladies for jewels. There was a Gujarati lady, whom he asked in Gujarati to give jewels and to request her friends also to give."

Turning to the host he said, "You feel sorry for inviting me." Then he narrated the story of how he got a lot of money from a Muslim friend of his in like manner when he was in South Africa.

He began auctioning articles. The first jewel, which was a gold bangle, was offered Rs. 20. He said: "*Muppata rupaye* won't make up the purse I want."

He was told that the bid was twenty rupees and not thirty.

"What nonsense!" he exclaimed. "It can't be given away for Rs. 20."

"Let us auction it at the meeting," suggested a bystander.

"No," replied Gandhiji, "close the door. What is the use of going away from the house without a good purse?"

A Police officer was talking to his friend. Gandhiji said to him, "You must help me now."

"I am helping you, sir," he readily responded. "I am inducing my friends to bid."

Gandhiji again looked into the accounts and said: "I want Rs. 500. You have yet to give me Rs. 180."

The guests, who were Komuttis, spoke in whispers to one another.

Gandhiji disposed of the gold hangle for Rs. 25. A little more money was raised by selling autographs. Then he left the house. The Komuttis had in them too much of the Benia for him to tap.

A Lover's Tribute

After Gandhiji had finished his speech at the Bellary meeting, he had a talk with some Hartjans, who had come there from a village, which was forty miles away. At that time a man was pointed out to him, who was standing on the steps leading to the platform. A gentleman introduced him to the Mahatma: "This man wants to present you four annas."

Gandhiji looked at the man thoughtfully and stretched out his hand saying: "I want his four annas."

The man passed on the amount.

He was half naked. He had a *looper* (loincloth), a torn over-coat without buttons and a weather-beaten, shapeless, velvet cap. He was evidently a beggar. There was in his stare the resignation and apology of the utterly unfortunate. Not only that, his hands were shaking, as he had a paralytic complaint. He could not speak. Before he came in front of Gandhiji, he had been standing near the Police officers. People turned their faces from him. As he moved inch by inch towards the platform, many thought that he was going there only to catch a glimpse of the Mahatma. This was a most touching scene.

"I tell you the District Board gives Rs. 200 to you in anticipation of Government's sanction," informed the President.

"If it is not sanctioned?" Gandhiji asked.

"I give the amount from my pocket," assured the President.

This was announced to the audience, when a voice shouted, "Let the Municipal Chairman also do likewise."

More Temples Opened

Gandhiji reached Harauligere on the Dharwar-Belgaum road in the afternoon when the sun was high up in the sky. The place was not included in the itinerary, but the villagers had made elaborate arrangements to hold a meeting. Men and women were sitting on the bare ground in the hot sun so quietly that Gandhiji could not turn down the request of the local leaders to get down from the car. He went to the Hanuman Temple, which was by the roadside, and declared it open to Harijans.

At Bailhongal, he opened the Iswara Temple to Harijans. It is the oldest and most prominent temple of the place. As he came out of the gate, people who were standing on the verandah on either side touched his head. At one time eight hands were on it.

Americans' Curiosity

While Mahatma Gandhi was at work in the afternoon at his residence in Nipani, Mr. D. B. and Mrs. Updegraff came to have *darsan*. She showed him a card to write his autograph, when he told her: "It must be a difficult thing for you to find Rs. 10."

"I have no money now," she replied and turned to her husband.

"If so, I must borrow," he told her.

"Have you at least Rs. 5?" she asked him again.

Immediately he turned to an Indian friend of his and borrowed Rs. 5. She gave it to Mahatmaji for the autograph.

"How do you propose to spend the money you have collected?" she asked Gandhiji after a minute.

"Not a single pie for propaganda work, but all on constructive work," he told her.

"How much have you collected?"

"Three lakhs and fifty thousand rupees."

"How do you propose to spend it," she asked again.

"In constructive work," he replied. And by way of explanation he added: "That is, in giving education, building houses and digging wells."

"That's good!" she interrupted with satisfaction.

"Seventyfive per cent. of the money will be spent in the district where it is collected," he continued. "I have already asked for schemes from workers. If workers and schemes are available, the work is taken up in a place."

Mr. Updegraff, who was standing at a distance, now went nearer Gandhiji and said: "I want to ask a question."

"What's it?"

"How do you stand the strain of the journey?"

"Ask God about it?" replied Gandhiji, smiling.

"Do you have sleep?" Mr. Updegraff asked once more.

"Yes," replied the Mahatma. "If you had come half an hour ago, you must have found me sleeping."

"God bless you," the visitor said and held out his hand.

Mr. and Mrs. Updegraff shook hands with the Mahatma and went away. They are American missionaries.

The Tanjore Plate

The public meeting at Nipani, a tobacco trade centre, was held in the compound of a tobacco store, where the leaves were dried in the sun. The place was smelling tobacco. When Gandhiji took up a silver plate to auction it, he felt like coughing due to the smell. The meeting was held in the hot sun and the audience patiently sat on the bare ground to hear him. On the platform were six Americans, four men and two women, with some children.

The speaker concluded: "I am going to Bihar. I shall reach Patna on the 11th instant (March 11, 1934).

If necessary I shall ask your help for the sufferers in Bihar."

He introduced a brass plate with silver embossment of dattas to the bidders at the auction: "This was presented in Tanjore by the Viswakarma community. This is a beautiful piece of workmanship. I thought I could sell it at Belgaum or here. But in Belgaum I did not get a good price. I must get at least the cost price. I hope Nipani will not disappoint me. Now who will give more than Rs. 75?."

An association immediately offered Rs. 76. The bid for this article rose from Rs. 5 to Rs. 60 at Belgaum, but it was not satisfactory. So he withdrew it.

On the back of the plate was written

God is Truth

Presented by the Viswakarmas of Tanjore

to

Mahatma Gandhi

Harijan Conference

When Gandhiji went to Bijapur, his presence was availed of by the District Harijan Conference to hear him. As he entered the theatre where the Conference was held, the delegates and visitors stood up and shouted continuously "Mahatma Gandhi-ki-Jai."

After speaking at length about the change of heart among the Savarnas, he advised: "When you get up at dawn, pray to God. You must give up drink. You must also give up beef and carrion. Do not gamble. Be clean. Send your children to school. Those of you who do not know how to read and write must go to night schools."

The Poet's Quest

When Gandhiji's train reached Wadi at night, a middle-aged man in European dress came to him. He put a paper into Gandhiji's hand and asked for his opinion on the matter contained in it. He informed Gandhiji that he had sent a copy of it to a Moulana for opinion but he was not favoured with a reply.

Gandhiji read a few lines and remarked: "*A brightest star* that is not alright. Why not put it as a bright star?"

"Brightest means brilliant," explained the poet.

"Let us look into the dictionary," said the critic.

The critic pointed out a few unhappy expressions and suggested to the poet to write poetry in Urdu instead of English.

The poet desired to get a certificate and asked Gandhiji to read the composition.

"To go through it you must give me Rs. 5," demanded the critic.

"Yes, I shall give," agreed the poet.

There was a merry talk for sometime and, in the end, Gandhiji suggested to him to try again.

The versifier again made his appearance at Lingampalle Station after Gandhiji had left the compartment, and requested Mr. A. V. Thakkar to plead his case before the Mahatma for a testimonial.

The Hyderabad Surprise

MORNING FUNCTIONS CANCELLED

After four months of propaganda in the Central Provinces and South India, Gandhiji suspended it in Hyderabad to go to Bihar for earthquake relief. On the night of the 9th of March, 1934, the touring party broke up there. Gandhiji accompanied by Miss Miraben and others went to Patna via Kasipet while Mr. Thakkar, the General Secretary of the Harijan Sevak Sangh, with the cashiers went to Delhi via Bombay.

The response to Gandhiji's call was satisfactory so far. A little over Rs. 350,000 was donated towards the Harijan fund and about a million people had the opportunity of hearing the High Priest of Reform. A good many temples were thrown open to Harijans, of which the largest were in the districts of Kistna and Belgaum. He also laid the foundation-stones of a good number of mixed schools for Harijans and caste Hindus.

In Cochin and Travancore he had to convince the atheistic group of Ekshava youths of the truth of Hinduism, the glory of which a large majority of Hindus have lost sight of. In some parts of Tamil Nadu, where communist influence was perceptible, he spoke on the

evolution of an orderly and peaceful society. He expressed his desire to wipe out the distinction of high and low among men. In the districts of Karwar and Belgaum, all loving as he is, he denounced animal sacrifice. In fact, he preached all these four months brotherhood of creations and fatherhood of God.

The reception accorded to Gandhiji both in British India and in the states was uniformly grand. The Dewan of Mysore paid him a visit in the Kamara Park, while the Dewan of Sandur was present at the Sandur public meeting. In Hyderabad his residence was besieged by a large number of *darshtu*-seekers. But strangest of all was the surprise sprung on him by H. E. H., the Nizam's Government. He had a large number of functions to attend in Hyderabad City just after his arrival on the 9th of March, 1934. The Nizam's Government had been prevailed upon by the public workers to allow the august visitor to pursue his programme of work in the capital of the State. That day at half past eight in the morning he, accompanied by Mr. Vamanrao Nayak, left his residence to go to the *bandh* *ustad*. It was understood that he should merely visit the place, because the opening of the *bandh* shop by him was not permitted. But as his car was about to turn from the main road leading to the *Chowmahalla* to the street in which it was situated, the Police Constable on duty prevented it. Mr. Nayak told him that the Government of His Exalted Highness the Nizam had been pleased to permit Mahatmaji to go to that place. But the Constable replied that he had to carry out orders. In the meantime, a Police officer came to communicate the latest order of the Government, which was to stop the visitor from going to the shop. When the running car was stopped, a large crowd gathered there to know what the matter

was. Immediately the car drove back to Gandhiji's residence.

The morning functions were all cancelled. At about noon an officer of the Government came to Gandhiji with a letter that had great significance.

In the evening Gandhiji addressed a public meeting, which was attended by over ten thousand people. The arrangement was good. There was a plethora of Police to control the crowd. Some of the Constables wore cross-belts loaded with cartridges.

Welcome Song

Early in the morning that day when the train in which Gandhiji was travelling came to Vikarsbad Junction, there was a big crowd to receive him. In it there was Miss Padmasa Nayudu, who introduced to him a number of Christian missionaries and students. The compartment was filled with people who came to shake hands with him. The girl students, who had come there with their teachers, sang in chorus :

"Are you Mr. Gandhi ?

We are glad to welcome you."

They also sang *Janagana managan nayaka jaya he*, at the conclusion of which he remarked "Good!"

The Finis

INTERVIEW WITH MISS LESTER

"As I went through the different countries, the taxi-drivers, Negroes, people at the Chicago World Fair, where I was lecturing, the simplest people, unemployed workmen in America, farmers in Japan—all gave me messages for Gandhiji of good will and love, wishing him luck in his stand for the poor. Even on the boats crossing the Pacific and Atlantic, the passengers insisted on my lecturing on Gandhiji and his movement." Thus Miss Muriel Lester of Kingsley Hall, London, who was the hostess of Mahatma Gandhi when he went to the Second Round Table Conference, described to me the eagerness of people to know of him and of his activities.

Miss Lester was only a day in Gandhiji's camp with her niece, Mrs. Hogg, when I took an opportunity to interview her on the impressions of her world tour and her revisit to India.

"What do you think of Gandhiji's present movement?" I asked.

"It is recognised by those who know what he has been doing," she replied, "as one of the great achievements of the age." After giving a moment's thought to the subject, she added: "They look on it as a miracle. Of course, many people know nothing about the Harijan

movement and they repeat the old phrase 'Gandhi is a spent force.' If only they were here to see what is happening, they will realise how inapt that statement is "

"Do you think the fears of some people that the movement will not succeed," I asked again, "are justified?"

Miss Lester was again ready with the answer. "The crowds that come to him wherever he goes, not only voicing their enthusiasm for his cause but giving proof of it by offering their possessions, precious to them—demonstrate a devotion that cannot be simulated "

She recalled what she had seen the previous day and said: "I have just finished my first twentyfour hours on this campaign. There have been 50,000 people at the meetings alone, besides thousands more at the railway stations and lining the roads. Some of them had been standing in the heat for hours together before we arrived. Even children took off their bangles and gave their savings. The offerings altogether for the Harijan cause have amounted to Rs. 21,000 during the past day and a half. These are proofs that the people mean business, that they are backing anti-untouchability."

Then I trotted out the Indian Phrasisee's question: "Do you think that the economic uplift of Harijans must necessarily precede their social uplift?"

"This is a hypothetical statement. It cannot be proved one way or the other. As a matter of fact, people often make this statement with reference to my own people, the working people of East London. But it seems to me that it is a waste of time to say this must precede that, because, if we really intend to set up a better system of society, we have to work along all the different roads

at once, social, economic, personal, international and religious. Many people would pooh-pooh the last word 'religious,' but actually it is a source of most of the energy generated. Statements of the principles of equality and fraternity are not of much use unless people intend to put them into practice in their own personal relationships. To believe that untouchability is an out-worn and evil system is not enough. One needs to act. The religious motive drives one to do something about it. If in the most wretched of humanity in any part of the world, we recognise the children of God, action is bound to follow, and we become proud to serve them."

"There are some unbelievers who think that Gandhiji is making use of the present movement as a cloak for political activity. Do you think there is room for suspicion?" I enquired next.

"I have often noticed in England," she replied, "that anybody who knows Gandhiji, even if he happens to be bitterly opposed to his programme, never doubts his sincerity."

The interview concluded after she told me: "All over China, Japan and America, in the universities, clubs and churches, whatever might be the subject they had chosen for me to lecture on, they nearly always said to me at the end, *Now please tell us what you can about Mr. Gandhi.*"



The Guardian Press, Broadway, Madras-1934.

